

P.P. delineavit. M. V.d Gucht Sculp:

Christians I've sought from my Nativity:
I liv'd. I wrote, to Shew how Such to be:
Convinc'd the World of errors. Sins. abuses;
All hate me for't, each one my NAME traduces.
To death they persecute me every where:
How should I other Lot than JESUS bear?

THE RENOVATION OF THE Gospel-Spirit.

In THREE PARTS.

SHEWING THE

Universal Apostacy of Mankind

From the SPIRIT and LIFE of

Our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

WITH THE

Sure and Infallible Means of Retrieving it.

By Mrs. *ANTONIA BOURIGNON.*

Done out of French.

To which is Prefix'd,

A PREFACE to the *English* Reader.

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THE PREFACE TO THE *ENGLISH READER.*

CHRISTIANITY being the Power of God, by which the Holy Spirit reneweth the *Image of God* in Man, and reſtoreth him to that Primitive Dignity and Perfection from which he has fallen by Sin, that after this Renovation he may enjoy a bleſſed and glorious Immortality; the *Good* or *Evil* of Writings, Doctrines and Actions is to be meaſured according as they are truly ſubſervient, or hurtful, to the promoting this Great End. The Advancement of which being the great and only Aim of all the Writings of Mrs. *A. Bourignon*, ſome have been mov'd to render them more Univerſally uſeful to this Iſland, by publiſhing ſeveral of them from time to time in *Engliſh*. But no ſooner did one of them appear in our Language, than preſently unjuſt and unfriendly Repreſentations were made of them in Print, which occaſion'd the Publiſhing an *Apology* both for them and their Author; which, tho' ſome were pleaſed to make a great Noiſe and Clamor about, yet it remains ſtill a juſt Apology both for it ſelf, and the Writings and Perſon for which it pleads. And as Writings, ſo in like manner *Doctrines* and Sentiments are to be meaſur'd with reſpect to this great End: And from this ariſeth the Difference between *Fundamental* and not Fundamental, *Eſſential* and Acceſſory Truths; between Errors alſo that are pernicious and deſtructive to the Souls of Men, and thoſe that are not ſo: And this firſt ſort of Errors being of ſuch dangerous Conſequence, and ſo eaſily embraced by Men, to their great Hurt, I ſhall here take

Occaſion to mention ſome of them, which ſeem to have the moſt malign Influence on the ſeveral Contending Parties in this Iſland; and are ſo convincingly expoſed and confuted in theſe *Writings*, tho' they have been traduced as abetting ſome of them.

I.

And the firſt I ſhall mention is, that Fundamental and Principal *Error* of denying the *Original Corruption* of Man's Nature, or that we derive from our Parents a corrupt and depraved Nature, wholly degenerated from what it was when it came firſt from God: And on the other hand affirming, That the Human Nature is much the ſame now, that it was when firſt formed; that not only his Body was groſs, corruptible and mortal as now; but that alſo the Powers and Faculties of his *Mind* were alſo the ſame; that Sin has made but very little Change in Man; that he remains the ſame as before, with the ſame Faculties, the ſame Strength, the ſame Reaſon. If God at firſt made Man in his own *Image*, after his own Likeneſs; if he created him to take his *Delights* with him; if he made him to *love* and *enjoy* his God; if he endued him with *Powers*, Faculties and Inclinations ſuited to this great End; the preſent State and Inclinations of Man are ſo contrary to all theſe, that there needs no greater Evidence of the Corruption of humane Nature, than not to perceive it. Man, as to his *Body*, comes into the World, more wretched, miſerable and impotent than the Beaſts. If he were not car'd for, he would quickly periſh in his own Filth: As to his *Mind*, it is ſunk in Fleſh; born in abſolute Ignorance of God, its ſelf, and all things: the firſt Inclinations that appear in him are Self-Will, a Deſire to pleaſe himſelf, and to gratifie his Senſes; and according as he advances in Age, and meets with favourable outward Circumſtances to pleaſe and flatter his corrupt Nature, his vicious Inclinations ſpring up the more abundantly, and bring forth their corrupt Fruits. *Self* is the Eſſence of corrupt Nature. It ſeeks and aims at *Self* in every thing. Whatſoever it intends or does, *Self* is the *Principle*, and Self is the *End*. *Self* is the God that corrupt Nature adores, and to which it refers all things; and not finding in Self wherewith to pleaſe and ſatisfie it, it ſeeks for its chief Good and Happineſs in the Creatures. Thus the Root of corrupt Nature is *Self*, its Branches are Self-Love, Self-Will, Self-Eſteem, Self-ſeeking, Self-Confidence; the *Fruits* that it brings forth, are Pride and Vanity, a Deſire of Praiſe and vain Glory, a Thirſt for Revenge; Wrath and Anger, Lying and Swearing, Deceitfulneſs and Falſhood, Senſuality and gratifying

fying its corrupt Senſes: thereafter it breaks forth into Uncleanneſs, Luſt, laſcivious Thoughts, impure Imaginations, obſcene Converſation and Behaviour, unclean Words and Deeds; into Luxury, Drunkenneſs, and Intemperance in Eating, Drinking and Apparel. Beſides theſe, Avarice, Injuſtice, Fraud, and all Manner of Vices that cannot be named, break forth according to the Incentives and Occaſions given them; Luſts and Paſſions ariſe and rebel againſt Reaſon, and Reaſon againſt God: So that there is nothing but a total Diſorder in the whole Man; a Blindneſs in the *Underſtanding*, a Corruption of the *Reaſon*, a Perverſeneſs and Stubbornneſs in the *Will*, a Depravedneſs and Brutality in the *Affections* and Paſſions; and in all an Averſion to God, and an Adherence to Self and the Creatures.

Some may perhaps think that all this is the pure Effect of the outward Circumſtances and Temptations in which Man is plac'd in the World; and that it does not flow from a real Depravedneſs and Corruption of Nature. This is as if one ſhould imagine that the Principles of the Root, Stock, Branches, Bloſſoms and Fruit of a *Tree*, are not contain'd in the little *Seed* from whence it grows; but are the pure Effect of the Soil in which it is plac'd, and of the Rain that waters it. Theſe are the Midwives that bring all forth to the Birth, which were formerly wrapt up in the Womb of the Seed. A little *Infant* ſeems as void of all thoſe evil Fruits above mentioned, as the Seed of any Tree ſeems to be of all the Fruits it is capable to produce; but Time and outward Circumſtances and Temptations do midwife them into the World, and their Principles were originally in the Infant, as the Fruit is in the Seed; and theſe derived from its Parents as the Seed from the Tree. He muſt have very mean Thoughts of God and of his Image, in which Man was created, who imagines that Man's Nature is not now greatly corrupted and degenerated from the *State* in which it was created. *God is Love*, and God is *Light* and *Purity*. And Man is become all Darkneſs, Self-Love, and Impurity. The Seed and Image of the old Serpent, and of the Beaſt, is ſhed into his Nature. The Devil has an Averſion to God; cannot honor, nor love, nor truſt in him; perverts his Words and Deeds by falſe Gloſſes and Interpretations; is all Pride, and ſeeks his own Glory; full of Calumny and falſe Accuſations; of Hatred, Malice, Cruelty, and Revenge; of Subtilty, Lying, Falſhood and Deceit; a Thief, a Robber, a Murtherer; Self-willed, ambitious, ſeeking to exalt himſelf above God, and to have Men to worſhip and honor him; tempting them by all Means to deſpiſe God, and

to follow their own Wills and Inclinations; truſting to his own Wit and Underſtanding, and taking the Rule and Government of himſelf; contemning God, and diſdaining to humble himſelf before him; raging againſt him, and blaſpheming his Name; delighting to exerciſe Tyranny over Men, ſacrificing them both in Body and Soul to his Pride, Malice and Ambition; and all this from his moſt perverſe Nature, Temper and Inclinations. This Seed and Spirit he has ſhed into the Nature of Man, as ſad Experience teſtifies; ſo that Man, with Reſpect to his corrupt Nature, is an incarnate Devil: The only Difference is, that he is in a Poſſibility of being recovered out of that State thro' Jeſus Chriſt the Redeemer; by whom Grace, Mercy, and Salvation are offered unto him. Man alſo is ſunk into the Nature of the *Beaſt*, which being all Fleſh, can mind nothing but the things of the Fleſh, to gratifie its ſenſual and fleſhly Appetites and Paſſions; into which Man degenerating, becomes far more brutiſh and carnal than the Beaſts themſelves. Thus the Corruption of Man's Nature is unconceivably great, and not to be ſenſible of it, is a dangerous and pernicious State.

II.

A ſecond pernicious Error which flows from this, is a Perſwaſion that Sin having made ſo little Change in Man's *Nature* and Faculties, it is eaſie for him to recover the ſame State he was in before; eſpecially if God offer him outwardly the external Grace of *Revelation*, and make known his Will to him, and appoint ſome few Ceremonies to be obſerved by him; with which by the Help of an *Hiſtorical Faith*, which Reaſon gives to this external Grace and Revelation, (as the Devils alſo may do) it will be eaſie for him to return to his firſt Integrity; without the Help of any *inward* and operating *Grace* infuſed immediately by the Spirit of God into the Soul. Again, That it is a mere Fancy to imagine that Man was endued at firſt, with an original Righteouſneſs, which he has loſt, and that he is now born ſo weak and corrupt, and ſo dead in Sin, that the inward *Grace* and Operation of the Spirit of God only can recover him. Theſe two Errors make up the *Pelagian Hereſie*, which is certainly one of the moſt dangerous, and the moſt deſtructive of Souls; the Poyſon of which has been again ſpread and propagated in our Days. If Man was created in the *Image* of God, and if the Deſign of Chriſtianity is to renew this loſt and defac'd Image in Man's Soul; then this can be done by none but God himſelf, his Holy and Divine Spirit. As none can make the lively Image of

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the Sun in a Mirrour, but the Sun himself; so none can either form, or renew the living Image of God in the Soul, but God himself. *God is Light; God is Love*; and none can inspire the Soul with this Divine Light and Love but God only. He created Man to take his Delight with him, by uniting himself to him, dwelling and residing in him. He gave him Faculties whereby to desire and receive him freely and infinitely; but he could not give him Faculties whereby to produce him. He could not render himself the Work and Effect of Man's Powers; no more than Man's Eyes and seeing Faculties can produce the Light and the Sun. He is infinite *Light* and Infinite *Love*, and therefore these cannot be presented to the Soul but by and with God himself, as the Light of the Sun is presented to the Eyes by the Sun himself: and consequently all the Effects of Man's Powers, and all their Operations, without the immediate Operation of God's Spirit, are neither *Truth* nor *Charity*; no more than the Flashes of the Eyes without the Sun, can be its true Light. So that the Divine Grace and the Operations of God's Spirit were absolutely necessary for Man, to render him Good and Holy, even in his State of Innocency, when all his Faculties were sound and uncorrupted; how much more so in his corrupt State, when all his Faculties are disorder'd, and he morally sick, yea spiritually dead. When he has wilfully turned away his Desires from God, and deprived himself of his Light and Love, none but God can rectifie his *Desires*: *and tho' his Desire* and all his Faculties were re-established into their first Integrity, yet none can make this Light and Love to arise in them, but God himself, who is this very *Light* and *Love*. And for any presumptuously to imagine that they can attain thereto without the *immediate Grace* and Operation of the Holy Spirit, is the most pernicious of all Heresies. All the Saints have been deeply convinc'd that all Good is from God, that all good Motions and all good Operations descend from that infinite Source of Divine Love; and that all Evil proceeds only from the Creature: *If I could find in any Creature* (said a Holy Soul) *any Good that were properly the Creatures, and proceeded from it, and not from God* (*which is impossible*) *I would pluck it from it by Force, and restore it wholly unto God.* The whole Scriptures, and especially the New-Testament, are so full of this Divine Truth, that there cannot be a greater Evidence of the Blindness and Corruption of any professing Christianity, than to call in Question, or deny it. We are told it is the *Spirit* that *enlightens*, that *regenerates*, that *sanctifies*, that brings forth his *Fruits of Love, Joy, Peace*, &c. We are bid to *ask of God*, who

will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. Holy Persons are said to be the *Temple of the Holy Spirit*, and to be *sealed with the Spirit*; and the Children of God are said to be *led by the Spirit of God*; *and he who has not the Spirit of Jesus Christ is none of his.* Some have had the Boldness to affirm that the things spoken of the Spirit in the New Testament are to be understood of the extraordinary and miraculous *Gifts* granted to the Apostles in Order to the first planting of Christianity. Grant that some Passages are to be understood so, then this very Concession will evince the other. For if the *Gift* of Tongues, Miracles, and the like, are things so great, that they could not come but from the Holy Spirit, much more the Gifts of a Divine *Faith*, a living *Hope*, and especially an ardent *Charity*, which are necessary for all Christians and all Ages, and not for the Apostles only, and which are far greater Gifts than those of Tongues and Miracles; especially Divine *Charity*: much more, I say, must they proceed from the Holy Ghost. Will they say, That the lesser must be had from the Holy Spirit, and not the greater? No, *The Love of God is shed abroad in our Hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.*

III.

It is likewise on the other Hand a very pernicious Error, to deny the *Free-Will* of Man; and to assert that all his Actions good and evil are predetermin'd by God from all Eternity: nay, that he produces and determines in Time, all the Actions of his Creatures, but in such a Manner, that Man's Will is not constrain'd, but that Man must infallibly sin voluntarily, so that all the Fault and Blame shall lie on him. This some, not without Reason, do reckon a horrible Blasphemy, and to exceed the Malice and Wickedness of Devils and the worst of Men; which never came to that Height as to dispose a good Man to sin, to ordain all concurring Circumstances, so as that he may fall; yea, and to do it him the Act that constitutes the Sin, himself so dextrously and artificially, as that they who thus are the chief Agents do remain innocent, while the Man only is guilty. Man of Necessity must have been endued with a *Free-Will*, a Power of determining himself, at least, before Sin, else there could have been no Sin. For if all had been *determin'd* by God, the End he was to aim at, the Means to come by it, all the Circumstances and the most inward Principle by which he was to act, yea, and the Act itself; Man could not sin in tending to an End, by Ways, Means, and Circumstances, all infallibly determined by God: Or, if there were Evil in it,

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God would be the Cause of it, which is impious. Since then Man actually did evil, he had Liberty and Free-Will; and since Man continues to do Evil, he must still have the same Free-Will; and the Acts and Circumstances of this Free-Will, cannot be determined by God, for the very same Reason, that there would be no Evil in it, or God would be the Author of it.

This *Free-Will* is not the Power of producing physically the Acts of the several Faculties in Man; for God has endued each Faculty with that Power; and if that is corrupted, Free-Will cannot produce it. As the Power of seeing is by the Eye; and if that is spoil'd, the Will to see will not make one see: nor is it in the Power of producing the *Object* of any Faculty; for to will that the Eye see the Light, cannot make it see it, if the Light has withdrawn it self. But it is a *Power* to direct the Acts of the Faculties, with Respect to the Objects that offer themselves to them, which it is free for the Soul and in its Power to chuse as it will, to turn to this or that, to admit this or the other; or not to admit; and that more or less as it pleases, without being absolutely determined thereto, by any other Principle than by it self alone. This Free-Will every Man is conscious of; and if any shall speak otherwise with his Mouth, his own Heart and Actions must give him the Lie. All Mens Dealings with one another, and God's Dealing with them, being mostly by Remonstrances, Exhortations, Promises and Threatnings, do suppose in Man this free Principle, by which he may determine himself as he pleases. It is to awaken this Principle of determining himself that these Means are used; for it would be ridiculous to excite by Remonstrances, Promises, Threatnings, a *Watch* or any other Machine to go regularly. Moreover the Words do not determine those to whom they are addressed, no, nor yet the Ideas and Knowledge which those Words excite; else all who are equally exhorted, and who do equally comprehend what is said to them, would be equally and infallibly determin'd; and yet the contrary doth ordinarily happen, because after all, there is a Principle in Man, upon which no Impression, but that of his own *Choice*, does impose a Necessity of acting.

This is the greatest Present of natural Gifts that God has bestow'd on the Creature. There are two sorts of *Gifts* in Man; some which make up his *Nature*, his Essence, his Faculties; others, which are the *Objects* of those Faculties. Now this of *Liberty* is of the first sort. This Power is granted him because his Nature is of a *Divine Original*, *Gods Off-spring*, and he was made after the Image of God; because God would have

have the *Gift* to be mutual between Him and Man; and as he united himſelf to Man freely, out of *pure Choice*, and in a moſt generous Manner; ſo he would have Man cleave to God out of *Choice* freely, in a generous Manner, without any Conſtraint or foreign Determination; becauſe he would be lov'd by Man with a *true*, noble, ſincere and *free Love*, and not with a mercenary, bounded, fatal and mechanical one: becauſe he would be receiv'd into the Soul, and lodge in this Divine *Temple* in a Way becoming an Infinite God and an unlimited King: becauſe he would give to Man the Proofs of a true *Confident*, who truſts his Friend with what's moſt precious to him, which is Man himſelf, God's *Off-ſpring*, that he might give his Friend the Occaſion to give him the Proofs of a reciprocal *Fidelity*: he did it, that there might be between God and Man a *Commerce of Eternal Friendſhip*, throughout Time and Eternity; the Offices of Friendſhip being to do in Favour of his Friend, what his Friend deſires; to grant what he deſires, becauſe he deſires it; and this is the Foundation of Prayer: he did it, that Man's *Lot*, and Happineſs, and Love, might be *invincible* to every foreign thing; there being nothing more invincible than the Liberty of the Soul when it will not yield. He did it that Man might be a Subject capable of Recompence and *Reward*; for which there would be no Place, if all were fatally determined by another Principle than the Free-Will of Man; he would have Man worthy of *Honour* and Praiſe even from Him: He would have a Creature in whom he might take his *Delight*, and would have the Creature reciprocally to taſt to Infinity the moſt *Divine Joys* and Delights that may be found in God. In fine, he would needs give Liberty and Free-Will to Man, becauſe Man was to be the *King* and Governour of the Creatures of the whole Univerſe, and of his own Body; and therefore all things being put under his Feet, it had been the greateſt Incongruity in the World, that he in all things ſhould have been fatally determined himſelf, and ſhould have had no Free-Will in ruling them. Add this alſo to all the foregoing Reaſons, that God in creating Man would appear as a *Great King*, who was not only King over Slaves; but *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, as the Scripture calls him, for this very Reaſon, that he reigns over free Creatures, who ſhall have the Heavens and the Earth at their Diſpoſal; when reſtored to their firſt Eſtate, they ſhall reign with him for ever.

Some ſay, that God has given Men Free-Will as to *Civil* and worldly things, but not as to *Divine* and ſpiritual things. And yet Free-Will is the moſt Divine of all Advantages; and there-

therefore muſt be with Reſpect to Spiritual as well as Temporal things. If it be granted that a Man has Free-Will in the leaſt thing of the World, were it but to move a *Finger*, then it may, and muſt be true, that the ſame Free-Will extends to his Divine Faculties. It may be true; for all the Objections againſt Liberty are ſuch, as aim to prove that there is no Liberty at all, not ſo much as to move a Finger; and if it be granted that Man has only Liberty and Free-Will to move a Finger, this is capable of renverſing all the Objections brought againſt Liberty in every other thing.

The Objections generally adduc'd againſt the Freedom of Man's Will, if they prove any thing at all, would prove too much; *viz.* That Man had no *Liberty* at any Time, or in any State; no not *Adam* before his Fall. But the Nature of Man's Liberty, and moſt of all the Difficulties that are brought againſt it, may be cleared by an obvious Compariſon, drawn from the State of corporeal Nature, even as it is at preſent. Man has Faculties to receive the *Light* and *Heat* of the *Sun*. He has firſt received by the general Influences of the Sun and of Nature, bodily Life, and a Power to open and ſhut his *Eyes*. The *Light* and Heat coming from the Sun *offer* themſelves afterwards to Man's Faculties to be admitted into them and by them. It is certain Man has Liberty to *admit* them or not at his Pleaſure. Let us ſee what follows from this Liberty: Firſt, This Liberty is not *productive* of the Light and Heat, but only *admiſſive* of it, which makes no Change in the Sun, and reſpects only Man's own State. So it is as to the *Liberty* of the Soul with Reſpect to the Divine *Light* and *Love*. It changes nothing in God. 2. This Man has not the Sun or the Light and Heat at his *Diſpoſal*, to make them preſent when he pleaſes: He ought carefully to uſe them when they offer themſelves. The Night and Winter will come, and then it ſhall not be in Man's Liberty to enjoy them as before. He muſt abide in Darkneſs, or content himſelf with a little artificial Light and Heat which are ſoon ſpent. 3. Tho' the Sun's Light and Heat do actually *offer* themſelves, yet Man ought not to imagine, that do what he will he ſhall ſtill *enjoy* them at his Pleaſure; if he ſhut himſelf up in a Dungeon, if he diſable his Faculties by an ill Uſe of them, if he pull out his Eyes, or make them weak and ſickly; if he bruiſe his Members, diſjoint his Bones, and ſo forth; Let him boaſt of his Free-Will, and fancy that when he pleaſes he can go and chear himſelf in the Sun's Beams, when it ſhines at Noon-Day; he will find himſelf out in his Reckoning. He will then meet with ſo many *Obſtacles*, that he will tremble to think how to

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overcome them. His weak and *ſickly Eyes* will ſhun the Light, as their greateſt Torment; he dare not ſtir for Fear of awakening the Pain of his *diſlocated Members*, and he will not have the Courage to let them be ſet right again, chuſing rather to abandon himſelf to the Sleep of Inſenſibility, till he fall into the fearful Darkneſs of Eternal Death. O let us not mock God by a fooliſh and preſumptuous Security, during the Time he offers his Divine Light and Love!. 4. Suppoſe this Man opens his Eyes to the Light of the Sun, and expoſes himſelf to his Hear; what follows? Is he the Cauſe of his own Eyes, for that he can move them? No, he has only the Power (and this alſo received) to *determine* this Faculty at his Pleaſure. Suppoſe then he determine this, and open his Eyes and expoſe his Body to the Sun, Lo, he is then enlightned and warmed. This *Illumination* and Heat comes not from his Faculties, nor from their Activity, nor from his Choice and his Free-Will to conduct them: This Light and Heat are the Action of ſome other thing that operates in him. The *Connexion* that is between the free Act of opening the Eyes and the Act of Illumination that is joyned to it, is not cauſed by Man's Free-Will: the Man's opening of his Eyes is not the real Cauſe of this; for if there were no Light coming from elſewhere, he might do it a Thouſand Times to no Purpoſe. All the Acts of the Illumination and the Heat do flow continually from the Sun. This Cauſe is in the Sun, or in the Will and good Pleaſure of the Author of the Sun. All this is moſt exactly true as to the Free-Will of Man, with Reſpect to the *Divine* Light and Love, their Acts, and the Faculties where theſe Acts take Place. Man's Free-Will is not the Cauſe of the *Faculties* he has, nor that they naturally aſpire after Light and Love; nor that they are active and produce *Acts*; nor that he has the *Choice* and the Liberty to conduct his Faculties; nor that turning them towards their natural Object, which is God, the Act of Illumination and of Love follows in them; nor of the Connexion between the Act of Choice and the Act of Illumination and Love. All this comes from God, and Man brings nothing but an occaſional Act, which God requires of him, after having given him the Power to produce it. This Doctrine of Man's Free-Will vindicates the *Divine Juſtice* and Goodneſs, and ſerves to *animate* and encourage Man in the Strength of God's Grace, to exert that natural Power that God has given him to overcome his evil Habits and Inclinations, and to do *Violence* to his corrupt Nature, and to *ſtrive* vigorouſly to *enter in at the ſtrait Gate*: whereas the contrary Doctrine doth moſt blaſphemouſly make God the Author of

Evil,

Evil, by fatally determining Man's Will in all things; gives ſinful Man Occaſion to excuſe himſelf in all his Sins, as being neceſſitated to them by the Will of God; and encourages him in his ſtupid Sloth and Slumber.

This Doctrine of Man's *Free-Will*, is not inconſiſtent with that of the *Divine Grace*, but they mutually ſtrengthen one another. God prevents him by his *Grace*, by his *Calls*, and Warnings, and good Motions, and *Knockings* at the *Door* of his Heart; and if he anſwer it, he *accompanies* his Conſent and Attention with more Grace; and ſo goes on by his Grace to purifie and poſſeſs his Soul. All that the Divine Providence has left Man for his Duty, all the Buſineſs he has committed to him is, that the Free-Will of Man turn away his *Deſire* from all that is not God, or rather that it *conſent* to this turning away (of its Deſire, from all other things) which God by his good Motions works in it; and that it turn the *Deſire*, and offer it with its ſelf and all that belongs to it wholly to God. God will do all the reſt. But if Man does not this, God will never ſupply this Want. This is Man's Work, and his indiſpenſable Task, which he cannot neglect, without undoing himſelf to all Eternity. There is nothing more true, nothing more important in the World than this. This is the Kernel and Quinteſſence of true Religion, and of the true Worſhip that God requires from Men. O how much had it been for the Intereſt of true Chriſtianity, that thoſe who had taken upon them to declare, order and model the *Divine Decrees*, had not omitted this moſt important and *eſſential* one, which all the Series of the Divine Providence and Divine Revelation do proclaim and ſpeak out.

IV.

A Fourth moſt dangerous Error, is the *Doctrine of Reprobation*, or of God's having from all Eternity *predeſtinated* the greateſt Part of Mankind to Eternal Damnation; that he might manifeſt the Glory of his *vindictive Juſtice*, and do as ſome call it, *An Act of Sovereignity*. Father, forgive them; for they know not what they ſay! *Have I any Pleaſure at all that the Wicked ſhould die? ſaith the Lord God, and not that he ſhould return from his Ways and live? I have no Pleaſure in the Death of him that dieth, ſaith the Lord God; wherefore turn and live. Are not my Ways equal? are not your Ways unequal? ſaith the Lord God.* What more is needful to ſhew the Blaſphemy of this Error, than to explain what it is to *predeſtinate* to Eternal Damnation. To predeſtinate a Soul to Damnation, is to predeſtinate that it ſhall *hate* and curſe God to all Eternity; for this is the *Eſſence* of Damnation. *God is Love*, and he predeſtinated

deſtinated Man to love him, and to enjoy him for ever: and to predeſtinate him to hate him, would be to ceaſe to be God, and to be of a Nature which is moſt blaſphemous to be attributed to God. 'As for thoſe among Chriſtians (ſaith Dr. *Cudworth* 'in his Intellectual Syſtem of the World) who make ſuch a 'horrid Repreſentation of God Almighty, as one who created 'far the greateſt Part of Mankind for no other End or Deſign 'but only that he might recreate and delight himſelf in their 'Eternal Torments, they do but tranſcribe or copy out their own 'ill Nature, and then read it in the Deity; the Scripture declar-'ing on the contrary, that God is Love. Nevertheleſs thoſe 'very Perſons do in the mean Time dearly hug and embrace 'God Almighty in their own Conceit, as one that is fondly 'kind, Good and Gracious to themſelves, he having faſtned 'his Affections upon their very Perſons, without any Conſi-'deration of their Diſpoſitions or Qualifications.

V.

There ſeem to be ſome dangerous Miſtakes both in Opinion and Practice, as to the Nature and Exerciſe of *Faith*. Glorious things are ſpoken of it in Holy Writ, as being the Principle of a Divine Life. It is ſaid, the *Juſt ſhall live by Faith*: by it we are tranſplanted into Chriſt the *true Vine*, and broken off from the *wild Stock* of corrupt Nature: by it we are *born* anew, *born of God*; by it *Chriſt is born in us*; by it the *Heart is purified, the World is overcome*; by it *Chriſt lives and dwells in* the Heart: it *works by Love*; by it we *ſhall be able to quench all the fiery Darts of the Wicked*; *without it it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*. We are told *Heb.* xi. what wonderful things the Elders of old and the Holy Men of God did and ſuffer'd through Faith. But now there is nothing to be ſeen but a *dead* and barren Faith: *and when the Son of Man comes ſhall he find Faith on the Earth?* We have one *Principle*, by which we ſpeculate, and reaſon, and talk, and preach, and form Syſtems and Confeſſions of Faith and Religion; and another, by which we live and act, and by which our Deſires and Affections are directed; and ſo long as theſe are contrary the one to the other, our *Faith* is dead. So long as the God we worſhip is *Self* and the World, and our Deſires and Affections are ſet to pleaſe our ſelves, and to enjoy this preſent World, we may well have dry and barren Notions about God and Divine Things, and be ſtrongly perſwaded of them, and diſpute and reaſon about them, and contend zealouſly for them, and ſtrive to make others embrace our Belief and Opinion, and hate thoſe who do it not; but we have not true

Faith;

Faith; no more than he who is hungry, and thirsty, eats and drinks, because he *dreams* of Meat and Drink; or draws Pictures of them, about which he may dispute and reason; but his Body is not thereby strengthned or nourished. *Faith* is an inward living Principle, by which the Heart is renewed, and the Divine Life is breathed into it, and maintain'd in it. The *Object* of true Faith is *God*. He created the Soul to *desire*, to *contemplate*, and to *enjoy* him. The primary *Act* of Faith is to turn the *Desire* of the Soul sincerely and with humble *Trust* and *Confidence* wholly unto God, from self and from the Creatures. *Mihi autem adhærere Deo bonum est.* To die from ones *self* and his own *Desires*, and in all his Actions and Designs to bring his *Desires* into the *Will* of God, and not to arrogate to himself the Doing of any thing; but to esteem himself in all his Doings to be but a *Servant* of God, and all he does or intends, to *desire* to do it for God; listening continually to the *Voice* of his *Master*, who within him will teach him what to do. And not to give himself up to *Speculations* of Reason in Divine things, which puff up the Mind with Pride and Self-Conceit; but in Simplicity to yield up the Understanding to God, to be enlightned and directed as he pleases; and not to will or desire any thing but the *Grace* of God in Christ Jesus. So long as one rests in himself, and lays the Stress of his Designs, Thoughts or Affections, upon his own Watchfulness, Industry, Talents, Strength and Virtue, or upon any other Creature whatsoever, he does not live by Faith. To have Faith is to *live by Faith*, and not by Sense or human Reason. Now *Faith is the Evidence of things not seen.* Sense and corrupt Reason lead us to mind the things that are seen, to follow the *Maxims* of the World, to look upon Riches, Honours and convenient Accommodations in this World, as great and valuable Advantages, and the Concerns of our Life here as that which ought to take up all our Thoughts and Care; and to account *Poverty* and Contempt the most wretched State, which by all means we ought to avoid. But *Faith* draws us to regard the *things that are not seen*, and to look upon them as the most momentous in the World; to *see God* in all things, and to discern his most near and intimate *Presence* in our Souls; to look upon *Eternity* as all, and our *Time* here as nothing; to account *Honors* and Riches the most empty, airy, deceitful Bubbles; and the *Love* and Enjoyment of God, the true Bliss; to *conform* our selves to Jesus Christ, God made Man, as to the only *Way*, *the Truth*, *and the Life*; to embrace his *Maxims* as Depths of true *Wisdom* and Holiness, and to esteem the contrary Max-

ims,

ims, Doctrines and Actions of the World to be Folly, Ignorance, Error and Sin. This we may *pretend* to do in Talk, and Discourse, and Preaching; but we do it not in Reality, and Truth, and therefore have not Faith. The Notions given by some, and inculcated into the Minds of the People of *Saving* and *justifying* Faith, are such as encourage them to think this is not necessary, yea not possible: they make it to be only *a receiving and resting upon Christ and his Righteousness held forth in the Gospel for Pardon of Sin, and for the accepting and accounting of their Persons righteous in the Sight of God for Salvation* (as it is taught in the larger *Westminster* Catechism.) as if the chief and only thing desirable by fallen and sinful Man, were only Pardon of Sin, and not the *Renovation* of his Nature. As if a confident Reliance and trusting on the *Power* of God and the *Spirit* of Jesus Christ, promised to all Believers, for the overcoming corrupt Nature, were not a Branch of Faith, as necessary for Salvation as the other. For it was *for this End that the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil.* When the Sick and Diseased came to Christ, it was to be cured of their Maladies; and the chief Disposition required in them was, *Faith to be healed*; Faith in his Power and Goodness to heal them. *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. If I may but touch the Hem of his Garment, I shall be whole.* All this was a Figure and Emblem of the Spiritual State, that he came to heal Souls, to cure the Blind, the Deaf, the Paralytick, &c. this He is able and willing to do; and he requires in those that seek to him an entire Confidence and *Trust* in him for this, and a yielding up of themselves to be healed by him; and why this ought not to be inculcated and looked upon as a Branch of Faith as essential to the being saved by him, as that of relying on his Merits and Mediation alone for Pardon, which certainly is granted only for his Sake, is not easie to imagine. But as Jesus did not many Miracles in some Places, where they believed not on him, so where this Faith is wanting, the miraculous Power of Jesus in the Cure of Souls does not so much appear.

VI.

But the teaching the quite contrary to this, *viz.* That *no Man is able of himself, or by any Grace received in this Life, perfectly to keep the Commandments of God, but doth daily break them in Thought, Word and Deed*; the teaching of this, I say, (as the aforesaid Charechism doth) encourages People to yield to their corrupt Nature, and to conclude that it cannot be otherwise with them. Our Lord says to his Disciples, *If*

ye

ye love me, keep my Commandments: And again, *Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you.* The Aſſemby anſwers; Lord, *we cannot do this.* Jeſus ſays, *My Grace is ſufficient for you.* The Aſſembly replies, But we cannot do it by any Grace received in this Life. Theſe, like the guilty Spies in *Moſes*'s time, make the Peoples Hearts to melt, and to deſire to return to *Egypt*, rather than in God's Strength to encounter the Difficulties which are to be met with in the way to *Canaan*: *We are not able to go up againſt this People*, ſay they, *for they are ſtronger than we.* But *Caleb* and *Joſhua* ſaid, *Let us go up at once and poſſeſs it, for we are well able to overcome it; fear not the People of the Land, for they are Bread for us, and the Lord is with us.* "One great and ne-
"ceſſary Principle for the Renovation of the Church (ſaith
"Dr. *More* in his Divine Dialogues, *Dial.* 5. *pag.* 117.) is
"*Faith* in the Power of God, and the Spirit of our Lord Je-
"ſus Chriſt, which he has promiſed to all Believers; that
"by this Aſſiſtance we may get the Conqueſt over all our
"Sins and Corruptions, and *perfect Holineſs in the Fear of*
"*God*; that thro' the Spirit of Chriſt dwelling in us, we are
"able to be reduced to that Rectitude of Life and Spirit
"which our Saviour ſets out in his Sermon on the Mount,
"and elſewhere in the Goſpels. It is this Doctrine, he ſays,
"that muſt renew the World in Righteouſneſs. —— For
"what Doctrine but this, ſaith he, can reach the Hypocriſie
"of Mens Hearts, who under colour of not being able to be rid
"of all their Sins, will ſet themſelves againſt none, or but the
"leaſt conſiderable; or will be ſure to ſpare their darling Sins,
"and perpetually decline that Self-Reſignation, which is in-
"diſpenſibly required of every true Chriſtian; nay, they
"will quit none of them, under Pretence we muſt neceſſarily
"retain a gradual Imperfection throughout; and they will
"be ſure to pitch on that Degree that is moſt for their own
"Eaſe, and the Satisfaction of their Luſts. It is this Faith, he
"ſays, in the Promiſe of the Aſſiſtance of the Spirit of Chriſt
"that muſt renew the World into the living Image of God,
"and make all the Nations of the Earth bleſſed; which muſt
"bring the new *Jeruſalem* from Heaven, and will call down
"God himſelf to pitch his Tabernacle amongſt Men. *I can*
"*do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthens me.* Much more to this purpoſe is ſaid there by that Excellent Perſon.

VII.

The Notion that Men generally have concerning the *Imputation* of Christ's Righteousness, seems mightily to encourage them to gratifie their corrupt Nature, and yet to hope for the Favour of God, while they are told, that *such is God's free Grace to Sinners, that he pardons all their Sins, accepts and accounts their Persons righteous in his sight; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but only for the Righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and received by Faith alone; which Faith is the resting on Christ's Righteousness for Pardon of Sin, and for the being accounted Righteous.* So that tho' corrupt Nature still prevail, and a Man be a Slave to his Corruption, yet if his impure and wicked Heart believe that all that Jesus Christ has done and suffer'd, is imputed to him, he is righteous in God's Sight, and in a State of Salvation. Is not this a fearful Notion of *Justification*, capable to damn Souls eternally, instead of saving them? But *let God be true, and every Man a Liar.* If Justification is to be taken for an Act declaring one Just and Righteous, it is to be consider'd, that there are two sorts of such Justifications, the one false, and the other true. *Solomon* tells us, the false one is an Abomination to God, *Prov.* 17. 15. *He that justifieth the Wicked, and he that condemneth the Just, even they both are an Abomination to the Lord.* To justifie the Wicked, is to declare that a wicked Man is a just Man. This is a false Declaration, and such a judicial Act is abominable. No judicial Act can proceed from God, but what is founded on the Truth and Reality of the thing; so that when God declares that a Soul is pure and just, it must be truly so, and not meerly by *Imputation.* He that pronounces a Wo to those *who call Evil, Good; and Good, Evil: who put Darkness for Light, and Light for Darkness: Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter,* (Isa. 5. 20.) He who will by no means hold the *Guilty for Innocent* (Exod. 34. 7.) would he declare him Just, who is really Unjust and Wicked? It is true, St. *Paul* saith, that God *justifieth the Ungodly* (Heb. 4. 5.) But is it his meaning that God declares an ungodly Man to be a just Man? How could this ever enter into a Man's Imagination? God *justifies the Wicked*; not him who is still really in Wickedness; but who has been wicked, and is deliver'd and purified from it; such a wicked Man is declared Just, which may not only signifie God's declarative Act of his being so, but also the Operations by which God purifies the Wicked, and changes him from a State of Wickedness to that of Righteousness.

Would

Would any Man of common Senſe ſay, That Jeſus Chriſt by his *imputed* Righteouſneſs, accounts him *humble*, who is ſtill puffed up with Pride; him a Lover of God, who is full of Self-love, and the Love of the World; him chaſt, who wallows in Filthineſs; and him ſober and temperate, who lives in Gluttony and Drunkenneſs? And how ſhould one be juſt and righteous, who in his Heart and Life is unjuſt and unrighteous? St. *John* tells us plainly, that *he who doth Righteouſneſs is righteous, even as God is righteous*: and that *he that committeth Sin is of the Devil*, 1 John 3. 7, 8. That *in this the Children of God are manifeſt, and the Children of the Devil; whoſoever doth not Righteouſneſs, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his Brother.*

It is true, that for the Righteouſneſs and Interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, tho' ſinful Man be unworthy of himſelf that God ſhould offer him his Grace and Light, yet for Chriſt's ſake he accounts him not unworthy of having it offer'd to him; and for his ſake he treats Men as if they themſelves had preſented to him this ſo valuable Interceſſion and Prayer: and this may be called an *Imputation* of the Merits and Righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, and the offer of Grace the Effect of it. If a Man obey the Divine *Call* and Grace, and ceaſe to do evil, and turn away his Deſire from it, and ſo the Divine Light of Faith has found place in him, and goes on to baniſh Evil, and plant the Love of Eternal Good in him; then God declares that he *forgives* Man, for the Merits of his Son, all the Sins he committed before he yielded to the Divine Call; and owns him as one capable of Eternal Life, becauſe of his living Faith, and for that he has turned away his Deſire, Heart and Spirit from Evil unto God, and ſo is capable of Salvation, if he perſevere in this Courſe. But if one ſhall ſay, I have a *Will* to do Good, but for the earthly Fleſh which I have I cannot do it, yet I ſhall be ſaved by Grace, thro' the Merits of Chriſt, his Righteouſneſs ſhall be imputed to me; ſuch a one doth greatly deceive himſelf. The flattering of one's ſelf with Chriſt's Merits, without becoming a *true Child*, born of the Spirit of Chriſt, is a Falſhood and Lie. Righteouſneſs availeth nothing, if it be only imputed from without, *i. e.* if it is not really born in us, by which we are made the Children of God, and Heirs of Eternal Life.

VIII.

It is on the other hand a no leſs dangerous Miſtake, to think to come to God, and to be accepted of him, by *our own Righteouſneſs*, a Righteouſneſs founded on *Self-Love*, and

upon corrupt Nature; the Righteouſneſs of the *Law*, of the Letter, and not of the Spirit; the Righteouſneſs of Slaves, and not of Children; the Effect of a *ſervile Fear*, and not of *Divine Love*; a Righteouſneſs done in our *own Strength*, and not by the *Grace* of God. No, nothing is acceptable to God, but his own Work. We cannot *be found in him*, unleſs we have, *not our own Righteouſneſs, but the Righteouſneſs which is of God thro' Faith in Chriſt Jeſus*. There is a ſtrange Analogy among all the Works of God; and his Divine Oeconomy with reſpect to the Church throughout all Ages, is the ſame as to particular Perſons. After the Fall of Man, the World was *firſt* left generally in a State of *Ignorance*, without any expreſs Revelation of the Will of God, and then Men walk'd after the *Imaginations of their own evil Hearts*, and knew not that *Concupiſcence was Sin*; and becauſe they might apprehend if they knew the Will of God, they would do it; therefore God revealed his Will and Man's Duty by the *Law* of *Moſes*; nevertheleſs they remain'd as corrupt as before: They thought they would become righteous, and do the Will of God by their own Strength; but *Sin taking occaſion by the Commandment, wrought in them all manner of Concupiſcence*; for they could not *but delight in the Law of God after the inward Man*; *yet they found another Law in their Members, the Bent* of their corrupt Inclinations, *warring againſt the Law of their Mind*, their Conſcience and Reaſon inform'd by the Law of God, and *bringing them into Captivity to the Law of Sin*. Thus *the Law came by* Moſes, *but prov'd* too weak thro' the Fleſh to overcome Sin; *but Grace and Truth came by Jeſus Chriſt*, who did not only moſt plainly make known the Will of God, but gave alſo the Grace and Spirit to fulfil the ſame. *Lex* (ſaith S. *Aug. Expoſ. in Ev. Joh. tract.* iii. *de Cap.* 1.) *minabatur, non opitulabatur: jubebat, non ſanabat: languorem oſtendebat, non auferebat*, &c. The Law "threatned, but gave no Succour: it commanded, but did "not heal: it diſcover'd the Malady, but did not remove it; "but prepar'd the Patient for the Phyſician that was to come "with Grace and Truth; as a Phyſician ſends firſt his Servant to one whom he would heal, that he might find him "ready bound. Man was not whole, and would not be made "whole; and that he might not be healed, he boaſted that "he was whole. The Law is ſent, and binds him, he finds "himſelf guilty, and now crys out of his Bonds. The Lord "comes and heals him with ſome ſharp and bitter Medicines. "—Thou waſt afraid to taſte of them, tho' in Bonds; nevertheleſs the Lord, tho' free, drank of the Cup which he

offer'd

"offer'd unto thee: he ſuffered firſt, that he might comfort "thee; as if he had ſaid, That which thou art afraid to ſuf- "fer for thy own Good, I will firſt ſuffer for thee. And accordingly we ſee what a ſtrange difference there was between the Event of the giving of the *Law*, and the preaching of the Goſpel. The firſt was no ſooner given, but the *Jews* were more hardened, murmured upon all occaſions, *rebelled* againſt God, and became ſtubborn and *ſtiff-necked*; but upon the Promulgation of the Goſpel, Men *forſook* all and *followed Jeſus*.

This is alſo the way of God's dealing with particular Perſons. At firſt they follow their *corrupt Natures* and Inclinations without Reflection. Then the *Law* comes to teach them to know the Will of God, and their own ſinful, corrupt and damnable State by Nature, that it may be as *a Schoolmaſter to lead them to Chriſt*. The Law goes before the Goſpel. They muſt firſt be grieved by the Diſcovery of their Apoſtacy from God, and their Inability of themſelves to keep his Commandments, before they ſeek for Conſolation in God, that they may obtain and find it in Chriſt the promiſed Seed: They muſt firſt be *poor in Spirit*, before, thro' Faith, they can be rich in Chriſt. Now theſe things conſiſt not only in an External Word adminiſtred by Men, by which they inſtruct the Underſtanding of other Men; but it conſiſts chiefly in an inward Power, and living Experience (*for the Kingdom of God is not in Word, but in Power*) by which a Man finds that he is eſtranged from the Life of Chriſt, and ſo is a loſt Son; and that becauſe of Sin, he is truly dead and corrupt before the holy and living God. This he muſt feel, before he can be made alive and ſaved. Now tho' theſe things are true before God, yet they are little minded by Men. They appropriate Chriſt to themſelves as a Forgiver, as one that has ſatisfied all for Sin, and granted to them, that they ſhall not be looked upon as ſinful; he has kept the Commandments by which they ſhall have no feeling of Death. Of ſuch the Lord ſaith, *Rev.* 3. 17. *Thou ſayeſt, I am rich, and have need of nothing, and knoweſt not that thou art wretched and miſerable*, &c. *I counſel thee to buy of me Gold*, &c. Some lead Men to feel the Condemnation of the Law only that they may ſeek to Chriſt as a Forgiver, and to come to believe that his Righteouſneſs is imputed to them, and that for it they are accounted righteous in God's ſight. But our Lord tells his Diſciples, that unleſs their *Righteouſneſs exceed the Righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, they ſhall in no Caſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. The Apoſtle tells us, *Rom.* 8. 1. that they only are

free from the *Condemnation* of the Law, who *are in Chriſt Jeſus*, and they only are in him, *who walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit.* This is that Righteouſneſs which he calls the *Righteouſneſs which is of God*, Eph. 3. 17. where having ſhewn the Priviledges he had, as an *Hebrew*, and a Phariſee, and touching the Righteouſneſs which is in the Law, blameleſs; yet, ſaith he, *I count all things but Loſs, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord, for whom I have ſuffered the Loſs of all things, and do count them but Dung, that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having my own Righteouſneſs, which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Chriſt, the Righteouſneſs which is of God by Faith.*

There is then a great difference between one's own Righteouſneſs, or the Righteouſneſs which is of the *Law*, and the *Righteouſneſs which is of God by Faith*, or thro' the Faith of Chriſt. The firſt does not renew the Man, does not purifie the Heart, is the Effect of Pride and Self-love, or of ſervile Fear, and is done in a Man's own Strength; he leans to himſelf and his own Underſtanding, and truſts to his own Conduct; and where *Self* ſtill rules, it cannot be the Righteouſneſs of God, nor of Jeſus Chriſt. The other is the immediate Operation of the Spirit of God; its Principle is the *Love of God ſhed abroad in the Heart*; it is wrought thro' *Faith* in our Lord Jeſus, and not in *Self*, nor in any thing of this World; it is *Chriſt formed* in the Soul, the *Divine Nature and Image* renewed in Man, which Man himſelf cannot form in his Soul, but God; no more than he can form in his Eyes the Light of the lively Image of the Sun, but this the Sun himſelf muſt do. *God is Love*, and therefore the *Love of God* cannot be *ſhed abroad in our Hearts* but *by the Spirit of God*; and without the Love of God, there can be no true Righteouſneſs. But what the Apoſtle ſaid of the *Jews*, Rom. x. 3. may be ſaid of too many Profeſſors of Chriſtianity: *For they being ignorant of God's Righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own Righteouſneſs, have not ſubmitted themſelves unto the Righteouſneſs of God. For Chriſt is the End of the Law for Righteouſneſs to every one that believeth.* St. *Aug.* ſaith *Ep.* 120. "*Audi Johannem*, &c. Hear *John*, for he ſaid, "*God is Light*, and *in him there is no Darkneſs at all.* And "again he ſaith, *God is Love*; and therefore if God is Light, "and God is Love, verily Love is that Light which is ſhed "abroad in our Hearts by the Holy Ghoſt which is gi-"ven unto us.

IX

It is a moſt unjuſt Repreſentation of Chriſtianity, where the *Laws* and *Life* of Jeſus Chriſt, as the *Rule* and *Pattern* that all Chriſtians ought to walk by, are omitted; and ſuch *Syſtems* are given of Religion, as ſeem to diſpenſe with theſe, as not neceſſary to be regarded: And however excuſable this may be in other Books that treat of this or that particular Subject, yet that theſe ſhould be kept out of the *Confeſſions of Faith* and *Catechiſms* appointed for the Inſtruction of Perſons in the Religion of Jeſus Chriſt, is unaccountable. Our Lord tells us, That they who *follow* him *ſhall not walk in Darkneſs.* If *any Man will come after me*, ſaith Chriſt, *let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs and follow me.* The Apoſtles of Jeſus Chriſt, and the firſt Preachers of Chriſtianity, as they made it their great Buſineſs to be Followers of him themſelves, ſo they exhorted others to do the like. We have one *Great Maſter* Chriſt Jeſus, who, as he is the Eternal Word of the Father, teaches us inwardly by his Spirit (and all outward Admonitions and Inſtructions are deſign'd to lead us to this;) but Man now being ſunk in Fleſh, and deaf to the *inward* Teachings, and liſtning to nothing but what is convey'd to him by his Senſes, *the Word became Fleſh, and dwelt among Men*, that he might convey his Divine Truths into their Minds and Hearts by their Eyes and Ears (as we cloath our Thoughts with Words, to convey them into the Minds of others) and that he might give them a living *Example* after what manner they muſt return to God, and that he might die and ſuffer for them, leaving even in this an *Example how to follow his Steps.* Self-love, and the Love of this World render us incapable of the Love of God, ſo long as they rule in our Hearts. And therefore he in his Practice contemned and avoided all the things which turn away Mens Hearts from God, and upon which they place their Affections, *viz.* the Riches, and Honours, and Pleaſures of this World, and embrac'd thoſe things which corrupt Nature abhors, and which tend to mortifie it, Poverty, Contempt and Sufferings; and never *did his own Will in any thing, but the Will of him that ſent him.* "*Omnia quæ habere cupientes, non recte vivebamus, carendo vilia fecit. Omnia quæ videre cupientes à ſtudio deviabamus veritatis, perpetiendo dejecit.* "*Non enim ullum peccatum committi poteſt, niſi dum appetuntur ea quæ ille contempſit, aut fugiuntur quæ ille ſuſtinuit.* "*Tota itaque ejus vita in terris per Hominem quem ſuſcipere dignatus fuit, diſciplina morum fuit*, Aug. de Vera Relig. l. xvi.

The *Life* of Chriſt then is a plain Explication of his Doctrine. When therefore we come to doubt of the true Senſe of any Precept or Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, we ought preſently to have Recourſe to the *Living Commentary*, with a ſincere Deſire to imitate it; and there we ſhall ſee how, and with what Spirit he put in Practice the thing in queſtion: We ſhall there find a truer Explication of it than we can have from Men. For the Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt being the Death of the Fleſh, and of human Wiſdom, the Men of the World with all their Learning can do nothing but corrupt it, and wreſt its Meaning: For amidſt all the fine things that they can ſay, Fleſh and Self-will ſtill mingle ſome guilded Poyſon, that tends to deſtroy Souls, and to ſave corrupt Nature; and therefore we muſt not truſt in any but in Jeſus Chriſt alone:

X.

Another thing I ſhall mention as moſt deſtructive of true Chriſtianity, is the turning Religion into a *Speculative Knowledge* of Divine things, the forming a great many Ideas, dry and barren Speculations about the things of Religion, the turning them into Syſtems, and drawing them up into large Confeſſions of Faith, and requiring Mens Aſſent unto them, as a Condition of Chriſtian Communion, and forbidding all to buy and ſell, that will not receive this Mark in their Foreheads. The Religion of Jeſus Chriſt is a *practical*, not a ſpeculative Science; the *Art* of ſubduing corrupt Nature, and of turning the Heart wholly unto God; and all Arts are learned by marking well the Maſter's *Precepts* and Rules, and obſerving cloſely how he works by them himſelf, and following his *Copy*, and not by barren nice Speculations about every Word he ſays. All the main Doctrines of Jeſus Chriſt, and ſuch as are neceſſary to Salvation, are Matters of Practice. He did not fill his Diſciples Heads with Swarms of Speculations and Opinions, like to the Syſtems of Divinity with which the World abounds. His Sermons to his Diſciples, and to the People, tend all to the right forming of their Hearts and Lives. And as to Matters of *true Theory* and *Speculation* concerning the Nature of God and of his Doings, whether paſt, preſent, or to come, whether in this Life, or throughout Eternity; He has reſerved the ſolid Knowledge of them to be communicated by his Holy Spirit to thoſe who ſhall keep his Commandments, his main and eſſential Doctrine, and ſhall be eſtabliſhed in them. This is his own Declaration; *He that loveth me, ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifeſt my ſelf to him.* John xiv. 21. *If ye love me, keep my Commandments. And I will pray the Father,*

ther, and He ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. Even the Spirit of Truth, whom the World cannot receive, becauſe it ſeeth him not, neither knoweth him. John xiv. 16. Yea, and even what he declares about thoſe Divine things are expreſſed in ſuch a Manner that they cannot be well underſtood but by thoſe who are ſincerely diſpoſed to do the Will of God. But for the Rules of *Practice*, they are ſo *plainly* ſet down, that even wicked Men may underſtand them ſo far as is neceſſary for directing them to a State more acceptable to God; and then they ſhall come to know them better, not by ſpeculative Imaginations; but according as they depart from Evil, God will enlighten them by his Holy Spirit, ſo far as He ſhall ſee fit for them. But the Method obſerved in Chriſtendom now adays, is quite the Reverſe of this. To be a Chriſtian, a Man needs not much trouble himſelf with that which is the *eſſential* practical Part of Chriſtianity, as if that were not abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation. For without *Penitence*, *Humility*, Mortification, *Self-denial*, a real renouncing of the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh; without Purity and uprightneſs of Heart, without Patience, Peaceableneſs, Meekneſs and true Charity, Men may now a-days paſs for good Chriſtians, if they cordially embrace and be zealous for the *ſpeculative Doctrines* and Opinions of their Party, which are plaiſtered over with ſome Scripture Words and Phraſes, and yet are as different from one another as the reſpective Parties are; each of which have their peculiar Doctrines contradictory to one another, for which they bite and devour one another; and will have theſe paſs for damnable Hereticks that differ from them, as if Salvation depended upon the Belief of ſome ſpeculative Doctrines.

This was not Chriſt's Way. He did not treat all as *Hereticks* who were miſtaken in their Opinions. Tho' his Diſciples believed that Redemption and Deliverance was to come, not by the Death of Chriſt, but by an outward pompous Way; That he would reign very quickly in the World, would *reſtore the Kingdom to Iſrael*, and that they ſhould be his Miniſters of State, with a great many other childiſh Opinions; did he for this treat them as *Hereticks*, and excommunicate them? No, He is content with their having really *forſaken all to follow him*; that they love and imitate his Life, deny themſelves and be always ready to do the Will of God, as it ſhall be made known to them. He knew well that if they continued in this *Spirit*, the Miſts of their childiſh Opinions would ſoon evaniſh, and the Light of Truth would ſhine upon them. With him there is no other *Hereſie*, but another Way contrary to that of his *Life* and *Spirit*; and another *Aim* oppoſite

to

to that of the *pure Love* of God; nor any other *Heretick*, but he who knowingly and willingly chuſes another *Principle*, Motive, Object and End of the Deſires of his Soul, than the *Love of God*, and any other *Way* to arrive at this *End*, than the *Imitation* of the Life of Jeſus Chriſt, who is the *Way, the Truth, and the Life*; and *none can come to the Father but by* Him.

But the ſpiritual Guides and Rulers of Chriſtendom have now adays taken a quite contrary Method, and they apply themſelves to underſtand and teach the Doctrines of Jeſus Chriſt, and to explain the Scriptures, by the nice *Speculations* and Enquiries of their *Reaſon*, or by *critical* Remarks upon the Scripture Words and Phraſes, and comparing them with the like Words and Phraſes in the ancient Writers, whether heathen or Chriſtian; and examining the Senſe in which they took them: And thus the Heathen and Judaical or Rabbinical Spirits have prevailed in Chriſtendom, under the Cover of the Chriſtian Religion. The Scribes and Phariſees made the *Commandments of God of none Effect by their Traditions*. They conſidered what was ſaid and written by them of old time, and expounded the Law of God according to their Gloſſes; and they were the *Criticks* of the World in the Time wherein they liv'd; and tho' they thought themſelves very learned and knowing, and were ſo eſteemed in their Age, yet our Lord tells us they were *blind Leaders of the Blind*. Again, the Philoſophers among the Heathen, thought to meaſure all things by their *Reaſon*, and St. *Paul* tells us that *profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became Fools*. And now in this Age *Criticiſm* and *Philoſophy*, or the Exerciſe and Maxims of corrupt Reaſon are employed as the chief Inſtruments for underſtanding and explaining the Chriſtian Doctrine, which are certainly as improper Meaſures for that End, as to pretend to know and explain Sounds by the Eye, or Light and Colours by the Ear.

There is a real, living, certain, luminous, operative, ſatisfying and *ſolid Knowledge* of things; and there is a *Speculative* ſuperficial, dry and barren Knowledge of them. Thus as to ſenſible things, when the *Sun* ſhines, and we behold him and his Light with our Eyes; we perceive and feel a *real* thing, the Sun and his ſenſible Impreſſions upon us, which are ſo *lively*, that thereby our bodily Life is invigorated; ſo *efficacious*, that we can ſcarce endure the Force of his Light and Heat; ſo *certain* that there needs no other Argument to convince us that we enjoy the Light; ſo *luminous* that by his Light we ſee himſelf and all other Objects about us; ſo *ſatisfying* that we deſire no more Light; ſo hearing that we

are rejoyced and revived by him; ſo ſolid, that we find real and abiding Effects of it, both on our ſelves and other things. But if we withdraw from the Sun into a dark Dungeon, and there form to our ſelves the *Idea*, Image or Picture of the Sun, and of all the Senſations that we have felt by him, and diſcourſe and reaſon thereupon; we are not then affected with any *real*, ſolid, ſatisfying, and luminous Impreſſions as before; but with *imaginary*, dry, dark, and barren Shadows of them, which do not *enlighten*, chear, warm, and ſtrengthen us; even ſuppoſe all the Ideas be juſt and true; and to ſpend our Time in theſe Speculations and Reaſonings in this dark Dungeon, would never bring us to enjoy his Light and Hear. But if Men born *blind* would needs form to themſelves Ideas of the Sun, his Light and all the Appearances of this viſible World, and cauſe read to them the Books written on that Subject, and *reaſon* and diſpute with one another about the different and contrary *Ideas* which they had formed to themſelves about theſe things, profeſſing themſelves *to be wiſe*, thoſe who ſaw the Light would perceive they were *Fools*; that all their Ideas were falſe, and that their true Wiſdom would be to have their Blindneſs cured, and then one View would give them more true Knowledge of the Sun and Light, than all their *Speculations* and Reaſonings; or that they would ſuffer themſelves to be guided by one of Probity, who ſaw the Light; tho' he were not ſo dextrous at Reaſonings and Speculations as they themſelves. And thus as to God and Spiritual things, there is *a real*, living, luminous, efficacious, certain, ſatisfying and ſolid *Knowledge* and Perception to be had of them, which proceeds only from God and from his Spirit, as the Light doth from the Sun; which gives *Light* and Underſtauding to the Soul; which enflames the Heart with *Divine Love*, which tranſforms it into the *Divine Nature*; which *ſatisfies* and delights the Mind; which gives more *certainty* than all the ſpeculative Reaſonings in the World; which cannot be *printed* in Books, Words, and Letters, nor the Ideas uſually joyn'd to them, no more than we can print Life or Sounds; which Words and their *Ideas* can only direct us how and where to ſeek after and find; which God communicateth only to Hearts full of *Simplicity*, *Humility* and *Purity*, and which cannot be obtained by the *Speculations* and Debates of *Reaſon*, no more than we can thereby enjoy the Light of the Sun.

But there is another *ſpeculative*, dead, dry, barren, ſuperficial Knowledge of God and of Divine things; and that is when either they who have had ſome Degree of the *living* Knowledge of God, and thereby alſo their reaſoning Faculty

enlightned

enlightned with Ideas of Divine things, do presently turn away from their Dependance upon God, and give up themselves to the *Speculations* of their Reason and the forming Ideas of Divine things, and the comparing them together, and drawing Inferences and Conclusions from them; (even as if Men would abandon the Sun's Light and Heat, and imagine they would be sufficiently warmed and cherished by drawing Pictures of 'em and reasoning about them) or when they who were never thus enlightned, do thus give themselves up to follow the Activity of their *Reason*; or upon the reading the Writings of those who have been divinely inspir'd, and who have designedly written of Divine things to excite Men to turn unto God, they instead of obeying those Directions, without which the true Light cannot be had, do immediately with their blinded Minds form *Ideas* of Divine things; in which they differ as much from one another and from the Truth, as blind Men do about the Ideas of Light and Colours; and in which they spend all their Time, not only most *unprofitably* but to their own and others great *Hurt*; and being taken up with comparing and considering what others, particularly the *Ancients* have said of these things, and in what Sense they understood such and such Words, they pass their Time with a vain *Amusement*, they fill their Minds with many *idle Speculations*, they render themselves incapable of the *Light of* God, being so full of themselves and of their own Learning; they render their Hearts *dry*, and unfit for the Divine Unction, and the Divine Love; they contemn and *despise* others who are not so learned and knowing as they; they become *stiff* and peremptory in their Opinions, and take them for the Truths of God; they are inspired with an Aversion to those who differ from them, and count them Enemies to God and to his Truth. Hence the *Spirit of Dispute*, Contention, Strife, Division and Schism; the Spirit of Hatred, Violence and Murther, has overspread the World: By which it is most evident, that this Learning and Knowledge is not true Theology, and comes not from God, but has another Original. *If ye have bitter Envyings*, saith St. *James*, (Ch. 3. 14.) *and Strife in your Hearts, Glory not, and lie not against the Truth. This Wisdom*, this Learning, this Theology, *descendeth not from above, but is Earthly, sensual and devilish. For where Envying and Strife is, there is Confusion and every evil Work. But the Wisdom*, the Theology that is *from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easie to be entreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisie.*

None can understand God's Word, without his *Spirit*. A

Man

Man muſt in ſome Meaſure be in the ſame Diſpoſition, and be endued with the ſame Spirit with thoſe who penn'd the Divine Writings, elſe he cannot underſtand God's Mind in them. *The things of God knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God.* (1 Cor. ii. 11.) The Apoſtles received not the *Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of God, that they might know the things that were freely given to them of God: which things alſo they ſpoke not in the Words which Man's Wiſdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth, comparing Spiritual things with Spiritual. But the natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: For they are Fooliſhneſs to him, neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* It is certain then, That tho' one knew the Senſe of all the Words of the Holy Writ, according to all the Rules of Logick, Grammar, Rhetorick, Criticks, and the uſual Acceptations of Words in each Language; yet notwithſtanding he may be void of the Thought *and Sentiment* that God intended to put into Man's Heart, by theſe Words; and to affirm the contrary, is the Foundation of that falſe Knowledge of the Scribes and Phariſees, which our Lord and his Apoſtle St. *Paul* do condemn. God's Meaning muſt not be enquired for after the ſame Manner with that of Men. Men make Uſe of Words to excite in the Minds of thoſe who hear them certain Thoughts, the *Ideas* of which, Cuſtom has joined to theſe Words: but God makes uſe of Words to excite in the Hearts of the *humble* and *ſimple ones* who ſeek unto him, *Sentiments*, Light and Affections, which cannot ariſe in the Heart of the *carnal* and ſenſual Man, and which no Word nor Uſe of Language can make him comprehend; no more than any Words or Cuſtom of Language can beget in the Soul of one that is born blind, the Perception of *Light* or Colours. Could we imagine that blind Men, who underſtood many Languages, but had never ſeen Light or Colours, ſhould know theſe better by their *Criticks* and their *Reaſon*, upon Occaſion of hearing Books read about them, than thoſe, who without knowing ſo many Languages, had their Eyes open to ſee the Light? Could a Heart that never lov'd, feel aright the Sentiments of Love, by reading ſome Love-letters? The Holy Scripture is a Love-Letter, written to the Soul that's called to Love. The Sentiments of it cannot be comprehended but in the Spirit of Love. With this Spirit, tho' a Divine Lover could not make all the ſubtil Critical Remarks which might be made upon it, and tho' he ſhould even interpret it in another Manner than the Rules of Critick would allow; yet if his Interpretation end in divine Love, it would be true, good and ſolid, as to the Subſtance of it, tho' perhaps grammatically

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and with Reſpect to ſome Circumſtances it might be falſe. *Quiſquis* (ſaith St. Auſtin, de doct. Chr. l. 1. c. 36.) *Scripturas divinas, vel quamlibet earum partem intellexiſſe ſibi videtur, ita ut eo intellectu non ædificet iſtam geminam Charitatem Dei & proximi, nondum intellexit. Quiſquis vero talem inde ſententiam duxerit, ut huic ædificandæ charitati ſit utilis, nec tamen hoc dixerit, quod ille quem legit eo loco ſenſiſſe probatur, non perniciosè fallitur, nec omnino mentitur.*

XI.

But in the laſt Place, The Notions and Practices of Men in the ſeveral Parties, concerning the *Church of Chriſt*, its Paſtors, Doctrines and Ceremonies, the Diviſions and Schiſms ariſen in it, and their Treatment one of another; and the unfit Methods propoſed and taken for the Removal of thoſe Schiſms, are not a little hurtful to the true Intereſts of Chriſtianity. The Chriſtian World is divided into many *Sects* and Parties, and they diſtinguiſh themſelves from one another by *Syſtems* of Doctrines, Opinions, Forms and Rites; and theſe are properly the *Images* and Idols that are ſet up, which all muſt worſhip; their Zeal is chiefly employ'd about theſe. For theſe they write, and preach, and fight, and perſecute, and ſuffer, and overturn Kingdoms and Governments, and enter into Covenants and Teſts, and make great Bulwarks and Fortifications to defend and keep the Image: and by their honouring and cleaving cloſe to this, they diſtinguiſh themſelves from the reſt of Chriſtians; and none muſt be of their Communion but they who *worſhip* this *Image*. For theſe, they hate and proſecute one another with all the Spite and Striſe of Tongues and Hands that Malice can invent; they load one ſide with the Reproaches of being the *Whore of Babylon*, and the *Antichriſtian-State*; and that Side throws on the Reſt, the odious Reproaches of *Hereſie* and *Schiſm*; and theſe do ſo mutually upon one another: The one pretends, that no *Salvation* is to be had out of their *Communion*; and the other, that Salvation is very hardly, if at all, to be obtain'd in it, but may be ſafely had in theirs. The one that none can be ſaved without being ſubject to the Biſhop of *Rome*, and another, that Salvation cannot be had without the *Epiſcopal Communion*; another, that *Presbyterian Parity* is the only true Government of Chriſt's Church, and the ſetting it up and keeping up its Authority is the Setting the Crown upon Chriſt's Head; and great Pains are taken by each Party to make it appear that their reſpective Conſtitution was the Inſtitution of Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles. Men are train'd up for the Paſtoral Office, by filling their

their Heads with *ſpeculative Notions* of Theology, according to the Syſtems of the reſpective Parties; and when they have obtain'd a Miſſion and Ordination from thoſe who pretend the Right to it, they paſs for true Paſtors of the Church of Chriſt. And for healing the Diviſions of the Church, the only Meaſure taken by each Party is, to *draw* all others over to their *Communion.* All which ſeems rather to heighten the Evils, than to amend them.

Would Men ſeriouſly conſider, and lay to Heart the *Nature* and *End* of Chriſtianity, and walk cloſe by this Rule, it might ſerve to rectifie both their Judgment and Practice in this Matter. It is certain, that with Reſpect to God, there are only two Societies, Parties or *Cities* in the World, and every Man is a Member and *Citizen* either of the one or of the other, of the *City of God*, or of that of the Devil; of *Jeruſalem*, or of *Babylon.* They who follow the Luſts of their corrupt Nature are Citizens of *Babylon*, whatever Party they profeſs to be of; and they who are govern'd by the Spirit of Divine Love are the Children of God, and of *Jeruſalem*, wherever they are. *Fecerunt Civitates duas amores duo*; Saith St. *Auguſtin. Two Loves made two Cities. The Love of one's ſelf even to the Contempt of God, makes the City of the World, which is called* Babylon: *and the Love of God, even to the Contempt of one's ſelf, forms the City of God, which is alſo called* Jeruſalem. Now it was the Deſign of Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles, to diſtinguiſh the Children of the City of God, from thoſe of the World and of Concupiſcence. They took Care not to admit into the Church of Chriſt, the Citizens of *Babylon*, who were ſtill living in their Sins, but to receive ſuch as were dead to Sin, and reſigned to the Spirit of Charity; which Grace they abundantly received in Baptiſm. Yea thoſe who had begun only to fight againſt their corrupt Nature and were not as yet dead to it, they held in the Rank of Probationers and *Catechumens*; and they were not admitted into the Rank of true Chriſtians by Baptiſm, until they had given evident Proof of their being dead to Sin. But when Chriſtians began to degenerate, they ſoon confounded this Order; and to be admitted to Baptiſm, it then ſufficed to have ſome good Diſpoſitions, with a verbal Profeſſion that they would continue and go forward. And indeed it was eaſie for thoſe in whom Corruption did ſtill reign, without any real Purpoſe of ſubduing it, to make fair Profeſſions, and ſo to be received into the Church. And thus *Babylon* mingled with *Jeruſalem*, where none ought to be but Souls animated with the Spirit of Divine Charity. And this Mixture being once admitted, it was

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eaſie for the Wicked to encreaſe, and to introduce themſelves into the Adminiſtration of the Sacred Offices of Religion, and the Government of the Church; and to compel both Good and Bad to come in, without Regard to the Diſpoſition of their Hearts. When there were only a few ſuch wicked Perſons in this Society, it was become like a Body ſick and full of bad Humours; but when the Number of them became incomparably greater than the other, the Scripture denominating it by the greater Part, calls it *Babylon* and the great Whore; tho' yet there might be in it many particular Perſons, living Members of Chriſt's Body, or who laboured to become ſuch.

Thereafter Separations were made, and this great City was divided into ſeveral Parties; but this was not as to Concupiſcence and corrupt Nature; for that had ſtill the predominancy in each Party: No doubt the Separation between *Jeruſalem* and *Babylon* were moſt deſirable, but that is the wörk of God, which he will execute towards the End of this wicked World, by his laſt Plagues and Judgments; and it is not fit for Men to preſume upon it, and to pretend to root out the Tares, leſt they pluck up alſo the good Grain which is mingled with them. When the Sins of *Babylon* are become great and prevalent, and her Plagues ſo univerſal, that the Children of God will be enſnared by both, if they continue to ſtay among them; God Himſelf ſhall then ſeparate them, and make them hear: *Come out of her my People, that ye be not Partakers of her Sins, and that ye receive not of her Plagues.* God will then ſeparate them bodily, as they are already by the oppoſite Diſpoſitions of their Souls, the One being govern'd by the Spirit of Divine Love; and the other, by that of corrupt Nature. But the Chriſtian World being now divided into ſo many Sects and Parties, they had need to conſider how much they may be miſtaken, each Party in the good Opinion it has of it ſelf, and in the harſh Treatmenr they give to one another. For the preſenr Diviſion of Parties is not a Separation of the People of *Babylon* from that of *Jeruſalem*. No, but in each Party both continue mingled together; and in each, the Number of the firſt is incomparably greater than of the laſt. If then the Scripture denominating a Society from its greater and prevailing Part, calls that Society *Babylon* and the great Whore, where the greateſt Number, tho' profeſſing themſelves Chriſtians, are ſtill the voluntary Subjects of Satan, and walk after the Fleſh; ſure the ſeveral Parties of Chriſtendom have no Reaſon to fix thoſe Names upon one Party alone, to the Excluſion and Exculpation of all the reſt; ſeeing

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the far more numerous and prevailing Part of every one follow their corrupt Nature, walk after the Flesh, are Citizens of *Babylon*, deny Christ and God, tho' they profess to know them, and are under the Power of Antichrist. Again, no one Party has Reason to damn all the Rest as Schismaticks, or to deny them a Possibility of Salvation, but in their Communion. *That which we have seen and heard* (saith St. *John* i. 3) *declare we unto you, that you may have Fellowship, or Communion with us. And truly, our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* To have Communion with God and with his Saints, is to be united to them in the Spirit of Divine Love and Purity, for God is Love, and he that dwells in Love, dwells in God, and God in him. To be void of this Charity and Divine Love, is to be cut off from God and his Church, and is the most real Schism. *Every Branch in me that beareth not Fruit, The Father taketh away*, saith our Lord, *John* xv. 2. *Cum aliquis exit a veritate, a timore Dei, a fide, a charitate, exit de castris Ecclesiæ, etiamsi per Episcopi vocem minime abjiciatur. Sicut, e contrario, aliquis non recto judicio foras mittitur, si ante non exierit; interdum enim qui foras mittitur, intus est, & qui foris est, intus videtur retineri*; saith *Origen*, 24. Quest. 3. cum aliquis, &c. Not but that outward voluntary Schisms and Divisions are a most heinous Sin, and the Occasions of much Evil and Mischief. But when the Christian World is so miserably divided, each Party laying the Blame upon the other, each also being a Mixture of Good and Evil, and where so much of the Essentials of Christianity are still retain'd, as that well disposed Souls cleaving chiefly to these, may, by the Divine Grace, be renewed in the Spirit of Christ Jesus; such by the Divine Providence being brought up into one particular Communion, which others look upon as Schismatical, may be united to God in true Divine Love, and to all his Saints in whatsoever Party they are, and so be Members of Christ's true mystical Body, and void of the Spirit of Schism. *Many shall come from the East, and from the West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven; and the Children of the Kingdom shall be cast out.* They are never therefore out of the Church of God, who do truly mortifie their corrupt Nature, deny their own Wills, and turn their Hearts and Love wholly unto God.

And as to the different Pretensions of the *Papal*, the *Episcopal*, and the *Presbyterian Governments*, their Claim to Divine Institution, and to such an indispensable Necessity of Dependance upon them, and of being of their Communion, that without them the Holy Spirit cannot be received, nor Salvati-

on obtained, which soever of them may have the best Claim to Divine Institution, all of them ought to lay this to Heart, That as Jesus Christ his forming of a Church was not merely the forming an external Society, to be govern'd by external Laws and Rules; but it was the communicating to them a Divine Spirit, an inward Principle of Divine Life and Love, by which they become all one Body, being united by the Spirit of Charity, and without this none can be a living Member of his Body: So his forming of Pastors for his Church, was not merely the Giving them an outward Mission; but especially the endning them with his Spirit, by which they were made able Ministers of the New-Testament, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit. And that which rendred their Ministry and their Actions Spiritual, Lively, and quickening, was that they being regenerated and filled with the Holy Ghost, understood the Divine Truth and the Sense of the Holy Scriptures, which without this State are a dead Letter to the natural and carnal Man; and they being enflamed with Charity, this gave Life to all their Words and Actions, and inspir'd them also with fervent and effectual Desires and Prayers for the Encrease of Divine Grace in their Hearers; so that the Proof of their Mission was not *an Epistle of Commendation* (as St. *Paul* says, 2 Cor. 3. 1, 2, 3.) but the People whom they turned from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, *were their Epistle written in their Hearts, known and read of all Men, manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ, ministred by them, written not with Ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in Tables of Stone, but in fleshly Tables of the Heart.* And it was the Purpose and Will of Jesus, that this Office should be communicated to none but them who were truly regenerated, and endued with his Spirit. Now when this is so little regarded on all sides in giving Missions to the Pastoral Office; and the outward Skeleton of a Government is more regarded, and Men are more taken up about it, than in labouring after that Divine inward Life and Spirit by which it ought to be acted, no Side has reason to boast, that the Spirit of God can be communicated only by their means. No, *the Wind bloweth where it listeth, and no Man knows whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: So is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

Happy were it for the Christian World, if those who set up to be the Guides of Souls, instead of contending so much with one another about their outward Mission, did rather beware to thrust themselves into so sacred an Office; and those who pretended to the Right of authorizing them, did

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forbear to do it, until they found that they were truly called of God, as was *Aaron*; till they were dead to *Self* and the World, and regenerated in the Spirit of God, and wholly reſign'd unto him, ſo as to become the Temples of Chriſt, out of which he might teach in their human Spirit; for then they would be indeed the Miniſters of Chriſt. But when they are only choſen by Men, and are in no wiſe the Temples of the Holy Spirit, who ſhould teach in them, and by them; when *Self* and the World ſtill rules, they are then only Builders of the Great *Babylon*, verbal Wranglers, without Divine Underſtanding; Miniſters of the Letter, not of the Spirit, who perceive nothing of the Ways of God, and therefore cannot teach them unto others. And as it would be a ridiculous thing to call thoſe who never underſtood Muſick, to play unto the People on a well tun'd muſical Inſtrument, who could make nothing but a jarring Noiſe: So the Spirit of God having by the means of holy Men, who were guided by him, formed a well-tun'd Inſtrument, the Holy Scriptures, which when plaid upon by a skilful Hand led by the ſame Spirit, yields a moſt Divine Muſick to the Soul; and they who were the Inſtruments of framing it, and authorized to commit it to the Care of others, were careful to call none but them who were endued with the ſame Spirit, with the ſame Divine Skill, which they could eaſily diſcern, as well as an able Muſician can know the Capacity of another in that Art; it ſeems to be the moſt incongruous thing in the World to ordain to that Sacred Office thoſe who have nothing of that Spirit; and who inſtead of making a truly Divine Melody when they handle the Holy Scriptures, make nothing but a jarring Noiſe, being acted by the Spirit and Darkneſs of their corrupt Nature; and who inſtead of making the evil Spirit depart from Men, ſtir it up in them, even the Spirit of Hatred, Strife, Backbiting, Diviſion and Murther, and lull them aſleep in the indulging of their corrupt Nature, and ſo are Maſter-builders of the great *Babel* of the World, the great Building of Strife and Diſſention.

Others think to mend the matter by ſetting up a new Sect, and pretending to be led by the Spirit of God. Some of theſe at firſt may have felt ſome Divine Motions, but without waiting the Proceſs of a thorough Purification of corrupt Nature, and of being truly regenerated in the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, they have ſet up for ſuch; and ſo being puffed up in their Minds, have vented their Caprices and Imaginations for Divine Illuminations, and diſtinguiſhed themſelves from the reſt of the World, by avoiding ſome little Cuſtoms which

may be innocently uſed, and taking up with others, with which Self and corrupt Nature are well pleaſed to be cover'd, and making theſe the Badge of their Party; while in the mean time the Generality of them have as few Fruits of the Spirit, and ſeem to be as carnally and worldly-minded as others.

Now the only Meaſure taken for the moſt part, by thoſe of every Party, for removing the Schiſms and Diviſions of Chriſtendom is (what we have already mention'd *viz.*) to perſwade others to come over to their Party, as being, they think, the ſafeſt way of Salvation, and the ſureſt means of Unity and Peace; which is indeed the moſt effectual way to confirm and widen theſe Diviſions, inſtead of healing them. But if without reſpect to Parties, we could perſwade all to become one in Chriſt Jeſus, moving them to aſpire to be true Chriſtians, true Followers of Jeſus Chriſt, in denying themſelves, mortifying their corrupt Nature, and ſeeking after the greateſt and moſt Excellent Gift, which is *Charity*; then they would ceaſe from Spiritual and inward Schiſm; they would be united to God, and all the Children of God, of whatſoever Party, in the true Divine Love; and our outward Differences, Diſtinctions, and Names of Parties would be conſum'd and burnt up as Flax before the Fire. All the Buſineſs of the ſeveral Parties, is *to make clean the outſide of the Cup and Platter*; but could we follow our Lord's Counſel and Direction, and *firſt cleanſe that which is within the* Cup and Platter, *then the outſide ſhould be clean alſo.*

XII.

I have mention'd thoſe Particulars, both becauſe of the pernicious Effects of them with reſpect to Chriſtianity, and for that the following Treatiſe of the *Renovation of the Goſpel-Spirit* doth expreſly conſider them. Here are diſcover'd the great and fundamental Truths of Chriſtianity, the great End of Man's Creation, the ſtrange and univerſal Corruption that Sin hath now brought into his Nature; the abſolute Neceſſity, and Manner of overcoming it, in the right uſe of his Free-Will, thro' the Grace and Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, the vain Pretences by which Man ſeeks to excuſe himſelf from this, and to flatter himſelf in his Corruption. That the Goſpel-Law, and the Imitation of the Life of Jeſus, are impoſſible only to corrupt Nature, but not to the Grace of God; That his Merits are profitable to none without Obedience to his Laws; That the ſeveral Sects and the Learned obſcure the Goſpel by their Gloſſes; That God gives Grace to all for

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the overcoming of corrupt Nature; And that when Man wholly renounces his own Will, and is resign'd to God, he governs him by his Holy Spirit. These, and many other excellent Truths are declar'd in this Treatise, in so plain and convincing a manner, that they who read them with a single Eye, must needs see the absolute Necessity and Possibility, by the Divine Grace, of overcoming corrupt Nature, and obeying the Gospel-Law, in order to the being saved thro' the Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ.

The first Part of this Treatise being a Letter to one who thought himself to be in a regenerate State, and yet by his particular Actions discover'd the great Esteem he had of himself, that he judg'd because of his Virtue, that all others were oblig'd to serve and honour him, and that he deserved to have the best of every thing for his Use; some are apt to judge it less useful, because it contains Accounts of one Man's particular Humour and Temper as to every little thing. But seeing the Heart of Man is deceitful, and we are ready to account our selves vertuous and regenerated when it is not so; and that our true Disposition appears best in our particular Actions we may here, as in a Glass, read our own Temper, and may have reason to say to our selves, *Thou art the Man.* Others may be apt to blame her, as not speaking so friendly of the Reformation and the first Reformers. But Impartiality is a rare and singular Quality; and as we are pleased to hear her speak freely of many of the Corruptions of the Church of *Rome*, in whose Communion she was (as is to be seen in *the Light of the World*) so we ought not to be offended, if she blame what she thought blame-worthy in other Parties. It is most profitable for us to have our own Faults told us, that we may amend them. However this Impartiality has expos'd her and her Writings to the Anger and Censure of every Party, which does in so far justifie her, that what the Bigots of one side condemn, those of the other do for the most part approve, and account them solid Truths.

Among others the Learned Mr. *Dodwell* in his late *Epistolary Discourse* concerning the Distinction between the Soul and Spirit, *pag.* 297, 298. has been pleas'd, very uncharitably, both to censure her, and those who favour her Writings, as not being led by a good Spirit. This Charge is owing to the Second Letter mention'd in his Premonition, *pag.* xvi, which he honestly sets down as it was sent him from a Clergy-man in *Scotland*, who earnestly begs his Assistance against "Those he calls *Bourignonists*, who, he pretends, make light

" of Order Civil and Eccleſiaſtical, and have contributed " much to the vaſt Defection from the Communion Epiſcopal. I wiſh this Clergy-man had been better employ'd when he writ either his firſt or ſecond Letter, which not only occaſion'd Mr. *Dodwell*'s very unjuſt and precarious Reflections againſt Mrs. *A. B.* but alſo gave Birth to his New and Singular Opinion, which ſome, I'm afraid, will improve to very bad Purpoſes. But I wonder with what Confidence this grave Divine ſhould have vented ſo falſe and groundleſs a Charge againſt his Brethren, Neighbours and Countreymen, whilſt he could not be ignorant of the contrary; and eſpecially that ſome of them have ſufficiently teſtified their juſt Regard to Order, both Civil and Eccleſiaſtical, by continuing inviolably under their Obligations to the one, and in the Communion of the other, and by writing in its Defence. And as for the Perſon by whom he thinks fit to nick-name them, ſhe is very far from making light of Order: For ſhe ſays in her *Advertiſement againſt the Quakers, pag.* 166. " That the Dignity of one's " State and Office is always in it ſelf honourable; ſo that " tho' the Man who is plac'd in it were wicked, yet his " Subjects ought to honour him, becauſe God has eſtabliſh'd him " for their Superiour; for all Authority comes from God—— " That if a King or any other in Authority do evil, he him- " ſelf, and not others, muſt account for it, we muſt leave " the Judgment to God, and endeavour to do that which he " has enjoyn'd in the Command of *honouring Father and Mo-* " *ther*; where he makes not a Diſtinction of the Good from " the Evil, but ſpeaks generally of honouring all. —That " (*pag.* 172.) God gives a double Spirit to Superiours when " they are call'd to this Dignity; but when they make not a " right Uſe of thoſe Graces, or of this double Spirit, it is a Sign " that the Subjects have deſerved to be puniſh'd for their Sins, " and are juſtly chaſtiſed by the Injuſtice of their Superiours; " ſeeing God could not more fitly chaſtiſe a People than by " wicked Superiours, who are the Miniſters of his Divine " Juſtice. And in this Quality People ought to honour them, " tho' they be wicked, becauſe of their Dignity and the Power " that God has given them. Thus far *A. Bourignon.* And I know not if Mr. *Dodwell* would ſay more. Again, as to Eccleſiaſtical Order, ſhe ſays (*pag.* 171.) " She calls ſome " Prieſts by the name of *Reverend Father* (for which the " Quakers ſcoff'd her) becauſe ſhe knew them to be ver- " tuous, and Vertue is worthy of Reverence. And that tho' " ſhe did not diſcern Vertue in Prieſts, yet ſhe might call them " *Reverend Fathers*, becauſe of their Office and Dignities;

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" ſince God has choſen them to be Paſtors of his Sheep:—
" Which Office and Dignity cannot be loſt by the Sins of
" Men; for whatever their Behaviour may be, this Dignity
" will ſtill abide: and if a wicked Man exerciſe the Office of a
" Paſtor to day, it may come into the Hands of a holy Man
" to morrow. And (*pag.* 232.) ſhe ſays, Jeſus Chriſt ſent
" Perſons, even to wicked Prieſts, whoſe evil doings he had
" ſo often reproved: he ſent to them the Lepers, even after
" he had healed them. Thus far Mrs. *A. B.* So that if thoſe who eſteem her Writings, make light of Order Civil or Eccleſiaſtical, her Writings and Sentiments are not to be blamed for it. It is not, I muſt ſay, very diſcreet in the Author of that Letter, to call thoſe Perſons in deriſion, Enthuſiaſts and *Bourignoniſts*; Mr. *Dodwell* knows how to treat Perſons with more Humanity and Juſtice, than to give them new and odious Names. If we ſhould call this Author, and thoſe of the ſame Sentiments with him, *Dodwellians*, he would not think it a friendly Treatment; tho' there is as much Reaſon for the one as the other. They make no new Sect or Party (there being a great deal too many already;) neither do they ſeparate from the Communion in which they were, and in which they partake of the Word and Sacraments. They receive the written Word of God as the Standard of Religion, and the Apoſtolick Creed as the Summary of their Faith. They eſteem her Writings in ſo far as they are agreeable to the Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt: And as to her particular Opinions, they ſuſpend their Judgment about them; ſince neither the Belief nor Diſbelief of them is neceſſary to Salvation; for it is their earneſt Deſire to become true Followers of Jeſus Chriſt, and not of any particular Perſon. There are many other Writings, whoſe Authors never knew her, which they alſo eſteem, as being written in the ſame Chriſtian Spirit. So that this Gentleman can have no other Motive thus to nick-name them *Bourignoniſts*, but only that by an invidious Name he may expoſe them to the Hatred and Contempt of others. He is no leſs unjuſt in calling them *Enthuſiaſts*. It has happened to this Word, as to ſeveral others, which, tho' at firſt they were taken in a good Senſe, yet afterwards came to be appropriated only to an evil one. There is a true and good Enthuſiaſm, and there is a falſe and evil one: In like manner there are true as well as falſe Enthuſiaſts. True Enthuſiaſts are firſt (in a general Senſe) all Men, whoſe Hearts God touches, and moves to turn from the Evil of their Ways; and from this none are excluded, but the Devils and Damned. *Behold, I ſtand at the Door and knock*, ſaith our Lord, *Rev.* 3. 20.

Secondly, those who yielding to God's Call, have overcome their corrupt Nature, and are renewed according to the Image of God, the Spirit of God *dwells in them*, Rom. 8. 9. such are all the truly Regenerated. And in this Sense St. *Ignatius* Bishop of *Antioch*, and Martyr of Jesus Christ, is not ashamed to call himself Ἰγνάτιος ὁ καὶ Θεοφόρος, before his Epistles; *Ignatius, who also carries God within him.* A third sort are they, who are not only born again thro' the Spirit of God, but are by the same Spirit endued with singular Gifts and Graces, whereby they are made the Instruments of the Regeneration of others, and so are true Ministers of the New Testament: As the former is rare, so this is much more so. There is, fourthly, an extraordinary one, when God by his Divine Inspiration does so powerfully touch a Man, that falling into a Divine Extasie, he proclaims the Word of the Lord to Mankind; and thus were the Prophets of old sometimes moved. But then again, there are false and counterfeit Enthusiasts, such as, 1. those, who tho' they are not truly regenerated, and bring not forth the Fruits of the Spirit, yet would be thought to be guided immediately by the Spirit of God, and to have all their Delusions and Caprices to pass for Divine Inspirations. 2. There are others who pretend to be God's Embassadors, and that to resist them, is to resist the Holy Ghost, and that their Explications of the Holy Scriptures ought to be received as the Oracles of God; while in the mean time they are acted by the Spirit of the World, and their Explications are neither consistent with the Truth of God, nor with sound Reason. Now tho' those whom the Author calls *Enthusiasts*, do acknowledge that some have been endued with a real and good Enthusiasm, and others with a false and counterfeit one, yet this does not make them Enthusiasts, unless they pretend to it themselves. But they never arrogated to themselves any extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit of God; yea, they acknowledge that thro' their own Fault, they come far short of the ordinary ones, and are rather Catechumens and Apprentices in the School of Christ, than real Christians; tho' they earnestly desire, and hope for that Measure of the Divine Grace and Spirit, *without which none can see God*: So far are they from pretending to extraordinary Inspirations. This Person is no less injurious to them, by affirming, that they oppose the coming over to the Communion of the Church; and that they boast that Mr. *Poiret* had worsted Mr. *D.* thereby to raise Mr. *D*'s Passion both against both them and Mr. *P.* It is well known they are not very fond of the Presbyterian Communion and Principles, so as

as to be forward to encourage others to continue in them; and I dare affirm, That never one of them diverted any Person from the Episcopal Communion. It is as certain that Mr. *P.* never offer'd to refute Mr. *D.* in any of his Writings, nor did he ever concern Mr. *D.* in any thing he has publish'd concerning *A. B.* And so far was he from being her Executor (as Mr. *D.* is pleased to name him) that she never left him so much as one Penny. And in fine, since the Persons, of whom the Author of the Letter writes, have neither the Populace, nor Secular Arm to support them, the Author needed not give himself the trouble to represent them as so very dangerous; and I wish him more Charity than to think that they desire the Hurt of any one.

Mr. *D.* is pleased in the forecited Place, to give some Marks whereby to discern an Evil Spirit from a Good one, which he thinks applicable to this present Case; and withal, some particular Instances with Respect to Mrs. *B.* which he saies, give just Suspicion that it could be no good Spirit which she pretended to. But Mr. *D.* knows that Mrs. *B.* was baptized in the Episcopal Communion her self, and so received the good Spirit. She never separated from that Communion, nor form'd any new Sect; she condemn'd all Schism, and the making of Sects and Parties in Christendom, as the Cause of much Evil: She condemned People's despising their Pastors, and the Dignity of the Pastoral Office, and the Neglect of the Sacraments; and thought this inconsistent with a Christian Spirit. In her Advertisement against the Quakers *p.* 223, *&c.* in Answer to their Accusation, 'That she deceived Men by advising them to go to Church and hear Sermons, and use the 'Sacraments, which they say, ought not now to be used, 'since Men do so much abuse them. In this she says, 'Her 'Accuser seems more to err than in any thing; for if things 'ought not to be used because of the Abuse of them, Mankind 'would be shortly at an End; since there is nothing that serves 'for the Maintenance and Production of Men, which is not 'greatly abused.——and that to despise the Sacraments 'because they are abused, is more pernicious than to cease 'from Meat, Drink, *&c.* For the Soul has as much need of 'Nourishment as the Body, yea more: — And the Care of the 'one ought to be far greater than that of the other: That 'Jesus Christ being the true Pastor of Christians, has appointed 'to feed them in his Church, with the Food of his saving Doctrine; and has instituted the Sacraments as outward Signs 'of the Profession which Christians make of their being his 'Disciples. *Whosoever shall confess me before Men, him will I*

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'*confeſs before my Father*: by which it appears, that he not only 'requires an inward Spirit which God knows, but withal, an 'outward Profeſſion of Faith publickly made before Men, 'which is called *Baptiſm*; which he authoriſed in his own 'Perſon, going to be baptiz'd of St. *John Baptiſt*, and inſtitu-'ted alſo the Sacrament of *Love*, in breaking the Bread, and 'ſaying, *Do this in Remembrance of me*; by which He ap-'pointed that Chriſtians ſhould meet in outward Charity, as 'well as in inward; to ſhew that they ought to ſerve God in 'Body as well as in Spirit. It would be thought Unfaithful-'neſs in a Servant if he refuſed to wear his Lord's Livery.—— 'For my Part, ſaith ſhe, if I were not baptized, I would go 'yet to be baptized; becauſe the greateſt Honour I can have 'in this World, is to declare before Men, that I am a Chriſtian, 'and wear publickly the outward Livery of Baptiſm. Again, 'ſhe ſays, It is an abominable Doctrine, that Men ought not 'now to uſe the Sacraments, *&c.* For to make them deſpiſe 'theſe Means, would be to make them live like Beaſts, with-'out the Remembrance of God; and like Atheiſts, without 'knowing God.—So that tho' the Sacraments had nothing 'elſe in them, but the Repreſentation of what Jeſus Chriſt did 'and ſaid, it would be Good in general for all to frequent 'them. Thoſe who are diſtracted by the Affairs of the World, 'have need of Times and Places where they may be recolle-'cted in God. Jeſus Chriſt foreſeeing this Frailty, inſtituted 'the Sacraments, and annexed Promiſes to thoſe who ſhall 'uſe them; *He that believes and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved*; and 'elſewhere, *He that eats my Fleſh and drinks my Blood ſhall 'have Life in him.* Can the Quakers ſay, That Jeſus Chriſt 'has promiſed all theſe to no Purpoſe? Or, that they are Evil 'in themſelves, while they do abſolutely deſpiſe them, and 'tell me (ſaith ſhe) that I teach pernicious Doctrine, in adviſ-'ing the Uſe of them? tho' I confeſs they are greatly abuſed, 'and that the Devil receives more Honour by them than God. 'This Abuſe of them is true, but it is alſo true that ſome Per-'ſons find great Advantage by the Sacraments.——And this 'I can ſay from Experience, that truly theſe proved Means 'to withdraw me from the Vanities of the World, and to lead 'me unto God.—And if I had deſpiſed all thoſe things, The 'Quakers adviſe, it is to be feared, I might have been loſt in a 'Forgetfulneſs of God, and things Eternal. Much more to 'this Purpoſe is to be ſeen in the forecited Book.

As to the Marks given by Mr. *D.* of a wicked Spirit, I am ſure, they are not in any ſort applicable to Mrs. *B.* or to the Caſe of thoſe Epiſcopal Brethren in *Scotland*. For they were

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baptized in the Episcopal Communion, and do abide in it; they encourage no Divisions, but earnestly wish to see all Christians united; and that they were one Heart and one Will in the Spirit and Life of Christ Jesus. They partake of the Sacraments; they make not the Graces of the Sacraments easily and frequently attainable without the Sacraments; nor do they pretend to such Perfection in this Life, as perfectly to supersede the Use of the Sacraments. But then Mr. *D.* must excuse them, if they differ from him in this, *viz.* That that cannot be a good Spirit which is deriv'd from any but the Bishops, to whose Disposal God has confin'd the Spirit. The Bishops do not believe it themselves; and I doubt if ever any Bishop in *England* vented such a Principle. I am sure many of them have published the contrary. There is a great difference between the Obligation of abiding in the Episcopal Communion, of not making a wilful Schism from it, and the being bred up in another, and continuing in it in Simplicity of Heart, serving God. Christ has assured us, that *the Father will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him:* and he tells us, that as *the Wind bloweth where it listeth, so is it of the Spirit.* St. Pet. *Acts* x. perceived that *God is no Respecter of Persons, but in every Nation he that feareth God and worketh Righteousness is accepted of him*; and while he preached Jesus Christ to good *Cornelius* and all his Household, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word. And *Peter* said, *Can any Man forbid Water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we.* If any whose Lot it has been not to be educated in the Episcopal Communion, do truly fear God and work Righteousness, shall we think that God will deny such his Holy Spirit, because it has not been their Lot to be bred up within the *Peculium* of the Bishops; and that he will out of his good Pleasure, make such immortal only that He may Eternally damn them?. May not Mr. *D.* be as charitable to such, as he is to the Gentiles that departed out of this World before the Coming of Christ; to whom he thinks the Apostles went after their Decease to preach the Gospel, and baptized the Converts, and so gave them the Immortalizing Spirit; since with God there is no Respect of Persons? Are not the Churches of *Rome* and of *England*, different and contradictory Communions? If therefore it be said that Salvation is attainable in those different Communions, must this be from an evil Spirit? The Multiplicity of Sects, is certainly a great Evil in Christendom; but the Way taken to remove them has hitherto proved ineffectual. The Church of *Rome*, will not have any a Member of the Church

of Christ, nor Salvation attainable without being in Communion with the Bishop of *Rome*, the Center of Catholick Unity; and they say it cannot be the good Spirit that does not unite all that partake of it in one Communion, under one Bishop by the firmest Ties of Spiritual Interest. Mr. *Dodwel* says, there can be no good Spirit derived from any but the Bishops. Mrs. *B.* is far from approving of Sects and Parties, or from making a new one, or from perswading People to come immediately over to the *Roman* Church, in which she was, or else they cannot be Christians. She complains also of the Injustice done her by the Quakers, in affirming that she had written, That *People may be saved in all sorts of Religions; and that every one ought to abide in the Sect in which he is. This*, says she, *is false, for she never thought so; and since she blames so much the Divisions of so many Sects in Christendom, how could she have advised every one to continue in his own?* For she wish'd earnestly to see Christians united, and to have no longer but one Heart and one Will in the Spirit of Jesus Christ. And indeed the only Means to bring all into one Communion, is to perswade all to cleave in Heart and Life to the true Doctrine of Christ, to become true Followers of Christ, and then the Differences of Sects and Parties would soon fall to the Ground.

The Grounds of Suspicion adduced by Mr. *D.* against *A. B.* That it could be no good Spirit which she pretended to, are very weak. If he had made it appear, that the Girls instructed by her, who proved Witches, were trained up by her to be so, it had been a just Ground of Suspicion indeed: But there being nothing more false than this, their being so is no more a just Ground of Suspicion against her, than it was against our Lord, that *Judas* was one of his Twelve Apostles; or against his holy Religion, that many have, and perhaps do profess themselves to be Christians, and even in the Episcopal Communion, who are in express Covenants with the Devil. And as to the Multitude of such in the World, I shall suspend my Judgment, considering the strange Discoveries that have been made in every Age and Nation; and shall be well pleased to see Mr. *D.* give a Demonstration to the contrary. As to his other Ground of Suspicion, taken, as he says, from her Extravagancy in designing a Journey to *Jerusalem* in Man's Cloaths, when she knew not on what Point of the Compass *Jerusalem* lay: Mr. *D.* is to be excused in some measure for his Mistake in this, seeing his Province is chiefly the ancient Writers; and what he says of others, it seems he takes upon Trust. But it had been more worthy his Character to have

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conſulted the Original himſelf, and then he ſhould not have been impoſed upon by others in ſo plain a Matter of Fact. *A. B.* never deſigned a Journey to *Jeruſalem*; and ſuppoſe ſhe had, where is the Extravagancy in abandoning her ſelf ſo entirely and with ſuch Confidence to the Divine Conduct, as not to deſpair to arrive at *Jeruſalem*, (if he will have it ſo) without knowing on what Point of the Compaſs it lay? This was but to imitate the Father of the Faithful, who being commanded by God to leave his Father's Houſe, and go to the Land that he ſhould ſhew him; he blindly obeyed, and yielded himſelf to the Divine Conduct, without knowing on what Point of the Compaſs that Land did lie. But the true matter of Fact is, that God having withdrawn her from the Vanities of the World about the Eighteenth Year of her Age, and led her to Penitence and great Contrition, ſhe abandon'd her ſelf wholly to God, often asking the Lord, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* repeating this often, and begging that he would ſpeak to her Soul, and it would hear him. And all on a ſudden ſhe heard as if another had ſpoke within her: *Forſake all Earthly Things: Separate thy ſelf from the Love of the Creatures: Deny thy ſelf.* At which ſhe was quite aſtoniſh'd, and meditated often on theſe three Points, conſidering how ſhe could accompliſh them, which ſhe thought ſhe could never do. Yet ſhe ſaid, *I will do it, Lord, by thy Grace.* When ſhe applied to this, ſhe found her ſelf greatly engaged in the Love of Earthly things, and of her ſelf in all. She begg'd to know of God if ſhe might not enjoy his Love, whilſt ſhe loved the Creatures with an honeſt Love; and it was told her, *That one cannot ſerve thoſe Two Loves without being unfaithful to the one or the other; that God will have an entire, and not a divided Heart.* When ſhe thought on this, ſhe hoped to find this Spirit in the Monaſteries; but when ſhe made the Trial, ſhe found her ſelf miſtaken. And asking, Whether ſhe ſhould go to find this diſengaged Spirit? It was anſwer'd, *It is no longer to be found in the World; all have forſaken me to ſet their Hearts on Earthly Goods. Seek me within thy ſelf.* The more ſhe enter'd into her ſelf, the more ſhe found her ſelf led to quit all, and retire, yet without knowing whither. She ask'd ſtill with Fervour, *When ſhall I be perfectly thine, my Lord?* And ſhe thought it was ſtill anſwer'd, *When thou ſhalt no longer poſſeſs any thing, and ſhalt die to thy ſelf.* She ſaid, *And where ſhall I do this, Lord?* It was anſwer'd, *In the Deſart.* This Word made ſo ſtrong an Impreſſion on her Soul, that ſhe long'd for nothing now but this

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Deſart; and having heard that there were deſart Places in *Italy*, ſhe thought of going to ſeek them, that ſhe might be abſolutely diſengaged from all things. Accordingly ſhe reſolv'd to leave her Father's Houſe, and undertake this Journey; and though at firſt ſhe was afraid of bad Rencounters by the Way, and troubled to leave her Parents, yet ſhe laid aſide all thoſe Doubts, and ſaid, *Lord, thou wilt guide me how, and whither thou pleaſeſt. For thee I do it; I will lay aſide my Garments, and take thoſe of a Hermite, that I may paſs unknown*; which accordingly ſhe did. Now, what was there in all this worthy of Mr. *Dodwell*'s Scorn? What was there in this unworthy of a Divine Inſpiration? Whilſt formerly God led into the Deſart *Moſes*, the *Iſraelites*, *Elias*, *John the Baptiſt*, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and there communicated himſelf unto them, and gave them Lights neceſſary for the Re-eſtabliſhment of his Church; which is repreſented in the *Revelation* to have fled into the Wilderneſs; and of which God ſays to his Prophet *Hoſea*, *I will allure her, and bring her into the Wilderneſs, and ſpeak comfortably unto her*. Whether by this Deſart be to be underſtood a Solitude in Spirit, or a bodily Solitude in Places unfrequented by Men, or even in the World, when Perſons live retired from Society; Mrs. *B.* believed ſimply, that it was the Will of God ſhe ſhould go into deſart Places, as ſhe heard the Fathers and Hermites had done heretofore. To ſee a Soul ſo full of the Love of God, ſo forward to forſake all for his ſake, ſo deſirous to rid it ſelf of every thing that might hinder its total Union with God, ſo freely and entirely to abandon it ſelf to the Divine Care and Conduct, is ſo rare and Divine a thing, has ſo much of the Spirit of Chriſt in it, and is ſo worthy of Divine Inſpiration, that it deſerves rather high Eſteem and Admiration, than Scorn and Reproach. And it had an Event worthy of Divine Inſpiration, and its Conſequences were very conſiderable; for by this total Reſignation of her ſelf to the Divine Diſpoſal, her Soul became a Temple of the Holy Ghoſt; and by this means the true Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt has been moſt plainly and convincingly reſcued from the falſe Gloſſes of Men; and ſhe has been led to communicate to the World, Writings of greater Value towards the Advancement of real Religion, than all the Criticks that have ever been publiſhed; take them all together.

'Tis true, in her Writings there are ſome ſingular Sentiments, but ſuch as ſhe owns are not neceſſary to Salvation; and which People, if they pleaſe, may look upon as Dreams,

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provided they take care to have their Hearts and Minds formed according to the Spirit and Doctrine of Jesus Christ. And for these I know Mr. *D.* will not despise her, because he advances as singular (though quite different) Opinions himself; which I hope he also does not make necessary to Salvation: For I am sure they are not Catholick Truths, though yet it seems he lays no small Stress upon them. If it shall not displease him to touch them in his own Stile, I will take the Freedom to say, that though I am perswaded, that Mr. *D.* in the main is guided by a good Spirit, yet to me that seems not to be a good Spirit, which teacheth, that all Human Souls created after the Image of God, and for this very End to love and enjoy God, are by Nature mortal, and all before the Coming of Jesus Christ were actually so: That since his Coming, God out of his good Pleasure has rendred those Souls which might have embraced his Doctrine, and have not done it, actually immortal; that he may damn them to all Eternity: That is, that he may make them hate and curse him for ever: That tho' before his Coming those of the Gentiles, who were filled with all Unrighteousness and Wickedness, had their Consciences to accuse and condemn them, and knew the Judgment of God against such Villanies, yet it is not God's good Pleasure to punish them for it after this Life; but those Souls, who since his Coming, have happen'd to live in Places where there are no Bishops, though it has been their Care to fear God, and work Righteousness, shall be rendred immortal in order to be damn'd for ever. Ah! what a mean Idea does this give us of the Divine Oeconomy! And what a poor Account of the great Designs and Dispensations of God towards Mankind! *The Lord knoweth the Thoughts of the Wise, that they are vain. Our God is the God of the Spirits of all Flesh: Not a God of the Dead, but of the Living; for all live unto him.*

The Author of the late *Essay* on Inspiration, is also pleas'd to censure Mrs. *A. B.* as a very proud and dangerous Person; but with what Colour of Reason or Justice, they that are acquainted with her Spirit and Writings, are best able to judge. *Pag.* 8. he says, She pretended to a greater and more extraordinary Inspiration than the Prophets or Apostles; which is utterly false, and I admire with what Face he can affirm it. And again, *Pag.* 356. he repeats the same Charge, and mentions one or two Particulars more, but after a very odd way of Reasoning, intended it seems only to blacken and calumniate. I wish this Rev. Author had discovered a greater Regard to Truth,

Truth, or at leaſt to his own Reputation, than firſt to mangle or miſrepreſent a Perſon's Words, which I perceive he is but very indifferently acquainted with, and then to draw invidious and inconſequential Inferences from them. I have no room left to recite his two or three Objections here; neither indeed were it neceſſary, if I had; ſeeing they, and a great many more of the like Nature, are ſufficiently anſwer'd in an *Apology* for Mrs. *A. B.* publiſh'd ſeveral Years ſince. And there he may alſo find ſolid and rational Proofs of her being Divinely inſpired, notwithſtanding his Exceptions to the contrary; and which I may venture to ſay, will hold good againſt all the Rules he gives for judging of Inſpiration by.

There's no occaſion therefore to add any thing more at this time; and indeed if there were, the Length of this *Preface*, which, 'tis hoped, the *Candid Reader* will excuſe, does not permit it.

To conclude then, let us heartily pray God to ſend forth the *Light* of his Truth into our Hearts, which may powerfully diſpel our Darkneſs, and redeem us into the Liberty of the Sons of God! May it pleaſe him to renew and eſtabliſh the *Goſpel-Spirit* among Men; and in order to it, to ſhed abroad his *Love* in our Hearts, by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt, which may radically conſume and extinguiſh whatſoever is contrary to the Purity of the Divine Nature in us; and effectually tranſmute us into the Image of our dear Redeemer, that the Love wherewith he hath loved us may be in us, and He in us. *Amen.*

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89 Men have forgotten God and his Law, and have made to themſelves Idols of External Worſhip and human Opinions.

90 Every party of Religion has retain'd ſomething of the good, wherewith to cover their Evil.

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93 Senſual Perſons diſpoſe of Paradiſe according to their fancy, as if it belong'd to them.

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104 God has not appointed this Life for Man for any other End, but that Man embracing a voluntary Penitence therein, might firſt receive Grace and hereafter Glory, Involuntary Penitence Diabolical.

105 The reaſon of the neceſſity of penitence comes from the Juſtice of God, which muſt concur on God's Part, in the Work of our Redemption; as well as his *Goodneſs* and *Truth*; to all which Man ought to conform himſelf. That the holy Trinity, which is incomprehenſible to the mind of Man, may be uſefully conceiv'd and deſign'd by theſe three Perſonal and diſtinct Properties.

106 *Jeſus Chriſt* being one with his Father, cannot but deſire that thoſe that would be ſaved ſhould be of the ſame mind, and act in conformity to the Divine *Juſtice*; which requires that Men ſhould ſuffer by Penitence, and be converted by a *Goſpel-Life*.

107 By a plain ſimilitude is repreſented the neceſſity of fulfilling the conditions of *Penitence* and *Converſion*, which *Jeſus Chriſt* has requir'd of all that would partake of his Merits.

108 Both the Modern applyers of the Merits of *Chriſt*, and alſo the Predeſtinarians, ſhock the divine Juſtice.

109 As to particular Perſons, the object of God's Election is the Good; and the object of Reprobation, the Evil. In the general all Men conſidered as in *Adam*, and not out of him, are equal in the matter of *Grace*, *Damnation*, *Pardon* and *Penitence* according to *Adam*'s diſpoſition; excepting Jeſus Chriſt.

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112 The want of this Spiritual Communication with God, makes

makes it apparent, that many at preſent are falſe Prophets.

113 There is no Communion to be had with Chriſt, but in the obſervance of the Goſpel Law; which is the laſt means of our Salvation.

114 God leaves Men at their Liberty as to the means; but they ruine both themſelves and others by their Wicked Doctrines and Practices, thro' the Sollicitation of the Devil.

115 Men make Chriſt an Accomplice in their Sins, by relying after the common manner on his Merits, and forgetting the fundamental Doctrines of the Goſpel.

116 The Eternal Father and the Son, both engage us to Penitence.

117 Man having his Underſtanding Corrupted, and not knowing what Penitence is pleaſing to God and ſatisfactory; Jeſus Chriſt came to ſhew by his Example how *Chriſtians* ought to perform it.

118 The *Jews*, thro' the depravation of their Minds, did likewiſe ſtray from the intent of the Law, which was to bring them back unto God by Converſion of Heart; but they cleav'd only to the Letter and outſide of it.

119 God has not given us Laws for his own ſake or intereſt, but for removing Impediments and Indiſpoſitions which withdrew the Soul from the *Love of God*, the End of its Creation.

120 The Commandment are impoſſible only in the Corrupt Imagination; and are given as a kindly ſupport and help, and not as an unſupportable Burthen to Men.

121 That it is more eaſie to deny, than to ſatisfy our ſelf-Love: And there is leſs difficulty in taking up our Croſs, than in not being willing to take it.

122 The neceſſity of obſerving the three Evangelical Counſels.

123 The Love of God cannot be attain'd without them.

124 The Love of God being ſo neceſſary, we deceive our ſelves if under any pretence whatſoever we look for Salvation, without this Love and True Repentance.

125 No Salvation nor Pardon thro' the Merits of Chriſt without Repentance.

126 Jeſus Chriſt had no deſign to Merit Pardon or Salvation to Men without Penitence.

127 The Example of the Primitive Christians, and that of Jesus Christ, lead us to Penitence and the Love of God.

128 The necessity of Christ's Example in a Mortal Body.

129 Without Sin Men had been Subject to no Infirmities.

130 Whence it comes that Men understand neither the Mysteries nor Truths of the Scriptures.

131 There be many divine Mysteries, the knowledge whereof is not absolutely necessary to Salvation.

132 Three Fundamental points of our Salvation.

133 The use of particular Mysteries, and of the Wonders of Eternal things; and the way to know and understand them.

134 Their indirect Necessity, because of the Instincts and Inclinations of Nature which it has retain'd even after the Fall.

135 The knowledge and Love of Eternal Things make us to Embrace the Evangelical-Life and Law.

136 The Ignorant who have no taste nor Love of Eternal Things, have thence taken Occasion to blaspheme God's Laws, calling them Impossible and uneasie.

138 The Eternal Good Things to come, which God will give to the Observers of his Laws; and the Good Things of the Creation, engage us to part with all other affections for his Love.

139 The Vanity of those things on which Man sets his affections, after he has withdrawn them from God.

140 Man's Wretched Estate, who having forsaken the Love of God, has Loaded himself with Miseries, both of Body and Mind. He shall be deliver'd from them in the Resurrection.

141 The Gross Corruption of our Bodies shall not be rais'd up again; but only the Internal and Immortal Body which is cover'd therewith both in the Good and in the Wicked.

142 The Internal Body shall not Rise again as if it had been Dead in it Self; but it shall be freed of the Death of Corruption, wherewith Sin hath covered it.

143 Nevertheless the Bodies of the Wicked shall be sorely Tormented with all the Evils of which they have been the cause: This will be their Hell.

144 In what sense the Scripture sayes, that this Flesh shall Rise again.

145 Without the Holy Spirit Men cannot underſtand the Scriptures, but are offended at the Truth. We ought to believe Jeſus Chriſt alone, who deſigns now to gather and govern his People.

146 But Men are unwilling that God ſhould govern them, chuſing rather to obey corrupt Nature, which is continually doing Evil; it muſt therefore be overcome before we can be ſaved.

147 Men moſt prepoſterouſly excuſe themſelves from ſtriving againſt their Fleſh, and they flatter it, pretending it is God's Work; that God makes Allowances for our Frailty, and will ſave us by the Merits of Chriſt Jeſus.

148 Neither the mortal corruptible Body, under which the glorious Body is inviſibly conceal'd, nor the Corruption of the Spirit, comes from God; and we are not to look for any Good from them.

149 Let Men know or do what they pleaſe, if they do not renounce their Corruption here, it is abſolutely impoſſible for them to be ſaved.

150 Except we hate Corruption and Self we can't love God.

151 The Love of God is the End of our Creation.

152 The Love of God and Hatred of Self are neceſſary for Salvation.

153 The Flatteries, Seductions and Imaginations of Men, by which they excuſe themſelves from theſe Duties, will be no Excuſe before God.

154 Both the *Chriſtians* and *Jews* have ſo gloſſed the Scriptures and the Laws of God, that they have baniſh'd the Love of God out of them.

155 Men conſidering the *Law* without regard to the *Love*, have judged it impoſſible and burthenſome, tho' it is only a Remedy to help Man to recover the *Love*.

156 God is immutable in all the Variety of Laws which he gives us at different times: For he has unchangeably the ſame Deſign of healing Men fallen into divers Evils. Example in *Adam*, and in the *Jews*.

157 We blaſpheme againſt God, when we look upon thoſe things as Burthens, which God has given us out of Love, and of which we only have need, and not he.

158 The indiſpenſable Neceſſity of obſerving God's Laws, without which Salvation is deſperate: The damnable Opinion that they are impoſſible, being a Fire that devoureth all without Remedy.

159 That this ſo neceſſary *Love* is not to be found at preſent even among thoſe who deſire to be God's Children.

160. Far

160 Far leſs in thoſe, who living according to Fleſh and Blood, do nevertheleſs pretend to be govern'd by King *JESUS*, and to reſtore *Iſrael*.

161 It is a Favour from God that our Corruption is not flatter'd.

162 The Neceſſity of being born again, and of reſuming a Goſpel-Life in the Simplicity of little Children, that we may be ſaved.

163 The Neceſſity of this Reſolution for eſtabliſhing a Chriſtian Converſation.

164 We ought carefully to preſerve our ſelves from the falſe Hopes of Deceivers, which can be of no uſe before God.

165 Except we renounce our Corruption, we have not Jeſus Chriſt for our Advocate, whatever Pretext we may have had for not renouncing it.

166 We ought to renounce our Corruption with a free and willing Heart; for God loves not Conſtraint.

167 The Author will not flatter, but ſincerely conduct unto God, thoſe who are willing to reſign themſelves unto him as little Children.

168 The *Chriſtian Infancy* compar'd with the Natural in *Seven* Particulars, of which Infants can only do Two, and muſt learn the other Five.

169 The Two firſt things they muſt do, *viz.* Weeping and voiding their Excrements.

170 Five things muſt be taught them: 1. To eat.

171 2. They muſt learn to walk.

272 3. They muſt learn to ſpeak.

173 4. They muſt learn to work.

174 5. They muſt learn to govern themſelves.

175 If it were enough to abſtain from Evil, a Child would be no proper Emblem of ſuch Abſtinence; but we muſt moreover give our ſelves up entirely unto God, of which a Child is a preſect Emblem.

176 Strange Abſurdity! that thoſe who have no Power of themſelves will not reſign themſelves to the *Almighty*.

177 Great Injuſtice! that we will not give our ſelves unto Him, to whom we belong.

178 We are to our ſelves cruel beyond Expreſſion, when we refuſe to yield up our ſelves to be govern'd by God.

179 The exceſſive Folly of chuſing to order and direct our ſelves, rather than to be reſign'd to God.

180 The Imprudence of that Soul that will needs govern it ſelf. The Wiſdom of the Divine Conduct towards the Soul, which it ties, ſwaddles, lays down, and takes up, like an Infant.

181 God raiſes up the Soul, and puts it to Reſt, and not it ſelf.
182 Men do no longer nouriſh themſelves with God's Word, as Children, but they corrupt it.
183 They who ſtudy Worldly Sciences, feed their Souls with the Excrements of the Earth.
184 Converſion unto God by Tears and Abnegation.
185 The Learned ought to imitate St. *Paul*, in being converted to God, whom they have perſecuted by their Learning.
186 God is willing to convert Men, but they will not be converted.
187 We muſt offer our ſelves up to God, and become blind with St. *Paul*, that we may afterwards ſee more clearly how to conduct both our ſelves and others.
188 How much one may do that is reſign'd to God.
189 God himſelf, and all things beſides, ſollicit us to reſign our Souls to him, and we will not do it.
190 The Happineſs of the reſign'd Soul.

THE

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3 We have nothing to fear, but the motions of our corrupt Nature.
4 This Corruption inſinuates it ſelf into all our Affections.
5 It makes us miſtake the Nature of Salvation, the End of Man, and it ſelf.
6 This Ignorance is to be cured only by going to School to Jeſus Chriſt.
7 Men are unwilling to learn there, that all that they do is evil.
8 Our Good Works iſſuing from corrupt Nature become Evil.
9 Men believe they love God, when they love only their own Corruption; which in the End brings nothing but Death.

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10 Man is free to chuſe Eternal Life or Death, Good or Evil.
11 Men chuſe Life or Death, by renouncing or following their corrupt Nature.

12 Few ſeek the Kingdom of Heaven; all generally are contented with that of this Life.
13 Our Corruption gives us Diſquiet here, and makes us loſe the Life to come.

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14 All Men are damned from their Birth, if they do not forthwith oppoſe their corrupt Nature, that they may be deliver'd from Damnation.
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16 *Chriſt*'s Merits are only available for thoſe, who ſubdue their Corruption by following his Example.
17 An Evangelical Life neceſſary in order to be ſaved.
18 We muſt reſolve upon the one or the other. There's no Exception.
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E R-

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THE PREFACE TO THE READER

IN this Divine Preface the Author treateth of the Miſeries into which Man fell after the Glorious State of his Creation, here deſcrib'd; and how by his Affection to the Creatures, he turned away from the End and Deſign which God had in creating him. Again, how Men encourage themſelves in their Diſeaſes and Vices by all ſorts of Pretexts, and eſpecially, by the Means of their Teachers, and even by perſecuting the Truth: And how notwithſtanding this, the Infinite Goodneſs of God hath not been wanting to procure them the Means of recovering their Salvation thro' Jeſus Chriſt, offering them at all times the Remedy of their Maladies by his Divine Laws; and in a ſpecial Manner in theſe latter Days by his Evangelical Law, the Spirit of which he is now willing to renew: And in fine, how abſolutely neceſſary it is for every one that would be ſaved, voluntarily to embrace this Evangelical Law.

§. 1. BEhold, *Friendly Reader*, here is a new-Years Gift very ſalutary to all thoſe that are willing to become true Children of God. It is the *Pearl of great Price* the Goſpel ſpeaks of (*a*) to buy which, a Man ought to ſell all that he hath. Many well meaning Perſons think they have bought it already, tho' indeed they deceive themſelves, and have nothing but Counterfeit Pearls, like to thoſe that worldly People uſe at preſent for their Glory and Ornament, while in Effect they're made but of Glaſs or Gum, which notwithſtanding appear thro' Art as if they were very coſtly,

(a) *Matt.* xiii. 46.

Pearls, and exceed the true ones both in Whiteneſs and Roundneſs, being better poliſhed and more agreeable to the Eye.

§. 2. This is invented by the Perverſeneſs of proud and deceitful Men, who deſiring to ſeem richer than they are, go about to imitate by their Counterfeit Ornaments, things that are precious and coſtly; finding out daily ſome new Inventions to make themſelves be preferr'd to the Rich. They uſe guilded Braſs inſtead of Gold and Silver, and print linnen Cloth ſo artificially with divers Flowers and Colours as to make it look like a Silk Stuff: they weave ſtript Cloth like Velvet, they ſtamp Linnen as if it were embroider'd; and ſo many other ways do they take to deceive their Neighbour, that 'tis very difficult to trade or deal with them, without being cheated even in thoſe things which one ſees with his Eyes. For the things that are bought by Weight are made wet that they may weigh the more: The Weights themſelves are falſified and leſsned of their Weight: Some uſe an heavy Weight for buying, and a light one for ſelling: Yards and Meaſures are ſhortned. Old Drugs are mix'd with new ones. In a Word, I believe there is nothing now ſincere and true to be ſeen in the Works of Men, but that they are altogether falſe, feigned, counterfeit and deceitful, having barely the appearance of Righteouſneſs and Truth, without any Reality at all.

§. 3. If this were only to be found in things temporal, there were ſtill ſomething that's good to be hoped for. Since the better ſort of People would not ſo directly take thoſe cheating Ways, but endeavour to buy and ſell honeſtly that they might preſerve their Reputation of being good. But the greateſt Miſery and the moſt lamentable Deceits that are in the World, conſiſt in the inward Diſpoſition of Souls, which generally take Falſehood for Truth, and Appearance for Reality much more in other things, than in thoſe that concern their outward and civil Affairs.

§. 4. And although this ſpiritual Deceitfulneſs be more dangerous and hurtful, yet it is leſs known and little regarded. The well meaning ſort of Men live at preſent in a falſe Reſt [or Perſwaſion] of their Salvation, becauſe their Lives have an Appearance of Goodneſs and Virtue: And this is ſo cunningly diſguiſed, that even they themſelves think they live well, and are really virtuous, while in Effect all their Words and Actions are but continual Sins. For being born in Sin, and enclined to all ſorts of Evil, they live in this Inclination, and fall inſenſibly from one Sin to another, without believing they do ill: ſo long as their Actions are not blameable before Men, they fancy themſelves to be in a good State, and

and presume on their Salvation as infallible; so much the more that other Men judge them to be in the Grace of God and in a State of Salvation, because they do no wrong to any one: They don't lie, nor steal, nor commit Adultery: and besides that they forbear to do all those kinds of Sins, they do also by their own Reckoning, and according to the Opinion of Men, a great many sorts of Good. For they call themselves Christians, they go to Church, they use the Sacraments, they give of their Abundance to the Poor, they're forward to speak of Virtue and spiritual things, they converse with good People like themselves, they contemn the worldly and fraudulent, and shun their Conversation all they can; in short, they do externally all that a good Christian ought to do.

§. 5. This procures them a fair Shew of Virtue, and an high Esteem before Men, who being as blind as Persons born blind, fall altogether into Eternal Misery: and while they think to enter into Eternal Felicity at their Death, they will discover, tho' too late, that the Pearl of Virtue which they regarded so much in themselves, hath been only a Counterfeit Pearl of no Value before God; and that it was good for Nothing but to blind the Eyes and Understandings of Men; and that therefore they have been deceived (*b*) in spending their Money or their Labour to acquire this *false Virtue*, which some made them believe to be true, real, and of great Price before God; tho' it ought no more to be valued than a Pearl curiously wrought of Glass or Gum; forasmuch as all that now appears to the outward Eye, is false and Counterfeit as well in the Civil or Political State as in the Ecclesiastick.

§. 6. We don't know now where to find Righteousness and Truth; and indeed it is of our time that the Prophet hath said, *Every one will ask his Brother, saying, is Righteousness with you? and each one shall answer, no.* Seeing Injustice, Lying and Deceit do reign every where, and there is no longer any thing found (*c*) in the House of the Lord; all therein is corrupted, every thing is perverted, all Men are fall'n, no Man knoweth the Lord any more (*d*) They have corrupted their Ways, walking in Iniquity, in Fraud and Deceit, every one following the Vehemency of his own Spirit, runneth headlong whithersoever his Corrupt Nature drives him, without the Fear of the *Lord*.

§. 7. Behold the miserable Estate into which all Men are fall'n, and especially the Christians now a Days, who by so many

(b) *Isa.* lv. 2. (c) *Isa.* i. 6. (d) *Psa.* xiv. 3.

Artifices make Falſhood to appear for Truth, and do ſo bewitch one anothers Minds, that they believe a Lie in Contempt of the Truth; and this thro' ſo many Gloſſes and contrived Words of falſe Divinity, vain Philoſophy and deceitful Academies, that the beſt Spirits are charm'd, and deceived by them, hearing and believing a Lie as if it were real Truth: for they cannot diſtinguiſh the one from the other. This is like the Counterfeit Pearls which appear more beautiful than the true Pearls of great Price.

§. 8. Yet in this poor Condition, Men are ſo bold as to expect Death, and live in Aſſurance of their Salvation; which is the greateſt Deceit of all others. For they that know their Miſery, and how far they have ſtrayed from God and from his Truth, may come to ſeek after the Means of returning to him, and of recovering the Truth; but ſuch as think they have thoſe good things already, will not uſe any Endeavours to retrieve or obtain them, but will die in a miſerable Lethargy, which will inſenſibly lead them into Hell, quite contrary to their Intention, and the Preſumption of their Salvation, which they groundleſly promiſed themſelves; Since no Man can be ever ſaved without attaining the End for which he was created, which is no other (*e*) but *to love his God with all his Heart, with all his Strength, and with all his Thoughts.*

§. 9. See now (Friendly Reader) if the Men of this Age live in this *Love*, and do that for which they were created, and then judge whether they can be ſaved by living and dying in the manner that we ſee them live and die in. For my Part, I can't ſee but that *all walk in the Broad Way, which* as J. *Chriſt* hath told us, (*f*) *leadeth to Deſtruction.* Since that all their Affections are divided into as many Parts as the Objects which they love are different; for ſome have all their Affections in the Riches and Honors of this World; Others, in the Eaſe and Pleaſures of the Body; others again, in Diverſions and ſenſual Recreations: Some place all their Affections on ſome particular Creatures; as ſome upon their Wives or Husbands, their Children or Kindred; Others, fix theirs upon ſome Beaſts, Stones, Jewels, or the like; and for the moſt part, Men place their Affections in Eating, Drinking, Sleeping, Lying, and ſuch other Pleaſures which are common with the Beaſts; and by this means turn away their Hearts from this *Love of God*, for which end alone he created them. Man thus loveth things that are unworthy of him, inſtead of loving his great Creator and Benefactor, of whom he holds

(*e*) *Mat.* xxii. 38. (*f*) *Mat.* vii. 13.

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his Being and all things, who renders him worthy of his Divine Love, and hath made him capable to love him.

§. 10. For God hath no need of Man, or of any other Creature, being in himself alone Holy and perfect, independent on all things, nay, whom all things do obey in Heaven and in Earth; who is able to create yet a thousand Worlds, and many Millions of different kinds of Creatures at his Pleasure, without the Privity or Consent of any other. But it was his good Pleasure to create Man after his own Image, that he might take his Delights with him; and as there can be no perfect Love except it be mutual, God hath desired that Man should love his God with all his Might, in a reciprocal return to the Love which He bore him; and that he should delight himself in him only, since God was willing to rejoice in Man, and to take his Delights with him: which did oblige Man to place all his Affections in God alone. Seeing he was created for no other end, he could not, nay ought not with Justice to turn his Affections towards any thing else but his *God*, that he might love him, and him only, with all his Heart, with all his Strength, and with all his Might.

§. 11. And hence Man falls into Idolatry when he placeth his Affections in any other thing but in God, and deserves to be driven from his Presence, and to be deprived of his Grace and of his Love, as being an unworthy and ungrateful Criminal, guilty of high Treason against the Divine Majesty, since he doth not obey his Commands, nor observe the End for which God created him. Christians do usually blame those that have Idols of Gold or Silver, which they respect and honor, but see not that they themselves are much more Idolaters than these Idolaters of any Mettal whatsoever: for it may be truly said, that the Christians have more Affection for their Riches, Honors, and Pleasures of the Taste and of the Flesh, than those Heathens have for their molten Idols, which their Hearts cannot be so much wedded unto, as the Hearts of those called Christians are to their Self Loves, whereof they are so much Idolaters, as even to forget God for the Sake of them: whereas those Heathens do yet know God, and remember him, confessing that there is a great God, the Author of all things; while many Christians deny him by their Works: They may confess God with their Mouths, but they are Lyars in their Words, seeing their Works destroy their Words.

§. 12. And indeed I would willingly ask any of those Christians, whether they were capable to live worse if there was no God at all? Since in Effect they commit all the E-

vils they can in Secret, and while they are not afraid of humane Rebukes; and if there was no God indeed, yet nevertheleſs they would be blamed by Men. Therefore they could not do greater Evils, though there were no God to puniſh them, ſeeing they give full Swinge to the Inclinations of their corrupt Nature; which being born in Sin, is inclin'd to all ſorts of Evils; and theſe they follow even without thinking they do ill; becauſe Sin doth ſo blind their Souls, that they don't ſee nor think any more on God or Eternal things, which to them are no leſs unknown than Inviſible, ſince they perceive not any thing with their underſtandings but what is Earthly and Viſible.

§. 13. So that the Men of this Generation may be more properly and juſtly call'd *Earthly* than *Chriſtian*; ſeeing they neither Think, nor Speak, nor Labour, nor Study, nor do any thing at all in the whole Courſe of their Lives but only for the Earth and for Time, or to endeavour to make themſelves eaſy and happy in this miſerable Life, as if Man were created only for it; though indeed all Men come into it only to do Penance, and to labour to recover the Love of God, which all Men have loſt in *Adam* by his Sin.

§. 14. Hence Men ought not to do any thing in this World, which is not directed towards this End only, ſeeing they are ſent hither for this very Purpoſe. One of common Senſe is capable to underſtand this, when he conſiders that Men do nothing here but eat, drink and ſleep, and labour for the ſupport of their mortal Life; as alſo that they are born in Sufferings and die in diſtreſs: All which things being evil, could not have been created of God, far leſs could they have been the End or Deſign for which God made Man. There muſt be therefore of neceſſity another End which God had in creating Man, beſides theſe temporal and tranſient Things, which occaſion ſo many Miſeries and Calamities to Mankind, ſuch as are almoſt inſupportable to many.

§. 15. Theſe can't come from an All-Good and All-Perfect God, who cannot do any thing but what is entirely juſt and good; for all his Works are without any mixture of Evil, *very good* and *very perfect*, like as their Author is, who can never do any Evil. Wherefore all the Evils that we behold in Nature, whether general or particular, have ſprung from Sin, which having crept into the Works of God, hath defaced and corrupted every thing which he had made *very good*. For after he had created the Fire of a ſweet and temperate heat; agreeably to warm whole Nature; Sin brought into it Burning and Smoak, which are two ill things that God never made.

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The Air was created ſweet and refreſhing for Man to breath in, and to carry him whitherſoever he would; but Sin entring infected this Air with bad Vapours, which frequently cauſe Death to Men, filling it alſo with Whirlwinds and Hurricanes which terribly toſs the Sea and the Waters to drown them; which is a very ill thing, and cannot come from God, no more than theſe Storms and Tempeſts can, which drown and deſtroy both Men and Beaſts: for God form'd the Element of Water to moiſten and refreſh the whole frame of Nature; and to give Sap unto all things, that thereby they might become Vigorous and Delightful: So that it was not in the Power of Water or any other of the Elements to hurt Man any manner of way.

§. 16. On the contrary, all the Elements and other Creatures were ſubject to the Will of Man, and obeyed him in every thing as their Maſter and Lord; Man being the Head of all Nature, and the Maſter-piece of the Works of God. He could then walk upon the Waters, and upon the Fire, and be carried through the Air where he would, and alſo enter into the Earth it ſelf (which would have opened and yielded at the leaſt motion of his Will) there to behold all its Rarities, as Mettals, Stones, and other things which grow in the Earth; for it was all tranſparent as Chryſtal, and could be ſeen throughout; it was likewiſe flexible as the ſofteſt Wax: it brought forth all manner of Fruits in all Seaſons, without any Corruption, which ſerved for Man's Food; and as they grew up fitted and prepared for his Palate, ſo he wanted neither Kitchin nor Brew-houſe to cook them. Here Men might have drawn out with Pleaſure the ſubſtance of all the Fruits of the Earth without any mixture of Corruption, which was not to be found before Sin: it was only becauſe of this that the Earth was curſed; for before it had no need to be till'd or cultivated, not bearing any thing of Briars or Thiſtles, or any ſort of Weed; ſeeing God had created all things pure, and good, and perfect. Sin alone gave to the Earth its groſſneſs, blackneſs and heavineſs, and made it to bring forth Weeds and evil Fruits to hurt and poiſon Men.

§. 17. Behold all theſe things hath God given me to ſee in Spirit, being admitted to a full View of the Creation of the World, as if I had been corporally preſent, when it was really and materially created. I have alſo ſeen in the ſame manner all the Evils which Sin hath brought into the Elements, the Plants, the Beaſts; as alſo to Man, and every thing that was created for him, as all the material Creatures were: Becauſe God being willing to form a Creature compoſed of Bo-

dy and Spirit, as Man is; prepared first his Creation for him, even all this beautiful World for the habitation, Food and Delight of his material Body; for it was his good Pleasure that all things should have their proper Food. He made Man of the four Elements, and of all that was most precious in Nature; so that Man hath in himself Substantially and in Perfection all that's contain'd in this great Universe. And God had given him Power and Dominion over all inferiour Things, which were to obey him as their Lord, appointed by God to govern them at his Pleasure. Moreover, God gave himself to Man, to be the true and proper Food of his Spirit, which ought always to feed on the consideration of his infinite Greatness, his Goodness and Power, and with Jubilation and Thanksgiving continually to praise such a Benefactor.

§. 18. But this wretched Man forgetting his Duty, turned his Affections to the Creatures, which God had subjected to him, loved them, and took Pleasure in them instead of delighting in God only, for which end he had created him. And thus Man, by turning away his Affections from his God to love the inferiour Creatures, brought the Curse upon every thing which was under his Government, and in effect became subject to all things over which he ought to have Dominion. Hence all the Creatures rose up against Man, because of his Sin and Unfaithfulness committed against his God. The Fire began to burn him, the Water to drown him, the Air to infect him, and the Earth to bring forth Briars and Thorns, and poisonous Herbs: The Beasts also began to bite and to smite him, the Iron to cut him, the Stones to bruize him, the Wood to wound him; in fine, every thing rose up against him, because he had exalted himself against his God, and fal'n from the End for which he created him. For it was necessary that all that was subject to Man should be subjected with him to the Curse which he had brought upon himself; and that all that was given him for his Food and Delight, might be the means of his Pain and Sorrow: all things thus changing their Order and Rank because Man had inverted the Order and Decree which God establish'd in him, namely, *to love God alone with all his might.*

§. 19. And indeed Man by this his Apostacy from God, hath not only render'd all the other Creatures miserable, but hath made himself the most miserable of any, being thereby exposed to Cold and Heat, and Weariness, and a great many other Infirmities both of Body and Mind; and finally, to Death it self. For, before Sin, there was neither Sickness nor Death, nor any other Inconveniency in Nature at all; the

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whole Earth being nothing elſe but a Paradice of Delight, where Man delighted himſelf with his God, and poſſeſſed all the Creatures, without being wedded to any of 'em, but uſing all with Thankſgiving, as the Gifts and Benefits of their great Creator. But as ſoon as Man had turned away his Affections from God, he became an Enemy to himſelf as well as to the other Creatures, when he began to diſcover his Uglineſs, Weakneſs and Miſery, ſeeing that of ſo beautiful and perfect a Creature, he was become ſo filthy, ſo groſs and ignorant, that he was utterly aſhamed of himſelf, and endeavour'd to cover his naſty Body, which formerly he had ſeen altogether fair, clear, agile, ſubtile and luminous, of an admirable Make and Contrivance, far exceeding all the other Creatures.

§. 20. For one could ſee through the Body of Man, even into his Bowels, and behold the great Variety of Bones, Veins, Nerves, Muſcles, and Tendons, every one of which performs its Office ſo well, and had its Motion ſo very regular, that the like is not to be ſeen; and all this with ſuch a beautiful Diverſity of Colours paſſing thro' one another, that Nothing in Nature or Art can ever be able to repreſent their native Luſtre and Motion. And beſides all the wonderful Beauties and Perfections of his Body, he had yet much more ſublime ones in his Spirit: for he knew the whole Frame of Nature, the Virtues of all the Trees, Plants, Mettals, Stones, and every thing in the Heavens, upon, and in the Earth, in the Sea, the Air and other Elements. In fine, Man had ſuch Wiſdom that no created thing was unknown to him; nay, he comprehended alſo Divine and Supernatural things, converſing continually with God, as a Friend with his Friend; for he was made a little God in the Likeneſs of the true Eternal God.

§. 21. But Sin hath rendred this Man ſo very miſerable in his Spirit, as well as his Body, that he is become void of Underſtanding, and without Diſcretion, incapable of judging even of the things which he ſeeth with his Eyes, or heareth with his Ears. Nay, he doth not know himſelf, thinking that God created him ſo groſs and ignorant a Creature as he ſees himſelf now to be; not being wiſe enough to comprehend that God could not have made ſuch a ſtinking and ſordid Body, ſo as all that comes from it is meer Filth and Rottenneſs, for all the Works of God are good and perfect without the leaſt Mixture of Evil, ſince that no Manner of Evil can proceed from God who is perfectly Good. But Men are become ſo brutiſh in their Minds, that they can't ſo much as underſtand

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what they ſee and feel in themſelves. They ſee themſelves miſerable, weak and ignorant, agitated with all ſorts of irregular and vicious Paſſions, ſo that oftentimes they cannot govern or quiet themſelves; Man being carried out by the Vehemency of his Spirit into all kinds of Extravagancies and Exceſſes: for the Thoughts of a Perſon that liveth according to the Motions of his Corruption, are altogether the ſame with thoſe of an Ape, which thro' Inconſtancy will always be jumping from one Place to another; and hath no ſooner begun one thing than immediately he leaps to another, and is never contented with what is given him, wanting always ſomewhat elſe. Juſt ſo doth the Spirit of the natural Man, he is never ſatisfied with what he hath, but ſo ſoon as he comes to poſſeſs what he eagerly deſired, and even obtain'd with ſore Labour and Pains, by and by he longeth for ſome other thing and that inſatiably, never ceaſing to covet what he hath not, becauſe of the mighty Unſteadineſs and Variety of his Thoughts, which if one would but narrowly obſerve for the Space of one Day, he ſhould ſometimes find ſeveral thouſand ſorts of 'em; ſo very unſtable is the Mind of Man become thro' Sin, that he is always and every Moment in Inconſtancy, leaping as a true Ape, from one Paſſion to another, being ſometimes both heavy and cheerful in one and the ſame Moment, without knowing any Reaſon for it: that which pleaſeth him one Hour ſhall diſpleaſe him another; and that which he loveth at one time he hateth at another; and doth not know himſelf what he would have, finding oftentimes Trouble and Grief where he ſeeks for his Pleaſure: So many divers Paſſions do aſſault him that he can't tell which he had rather yeild to. Fear frightens him, Dread makes him to tremble, Hope renders him joyful, Misfortunes melancholy: Proſperity raiſeth him above himſelf, Adverſity pulls him quite down, and ſometimes kills him outright. In fine, Man's Mind by Sin is become yet more miſerable than his Body, and both the one and the other are but a Sink of Corruption and Miſery.

§. 22. Yet the Meaning is not as if God had given to Man ſince his Sin, another Body or another Spirit diſtinct from thoſe he gave him at his Creation: No; for that Glorious Body and Spirit which God gave him in the Beginning, ſhall never end, ſeeing all the Works of God are Eternal and cannot periſh, but will endure to all Eternity, always living and without any End. This is an Article of Faith which all Chriſtians profeſs to own, when they ſay, they believe *a Life everlaſting*: but they don't well underſtand this their Belief, while they

they think that this groſs and mortal Body ſhall ariſe again after Death to live for ever; Since it were much to be wiſhed that this Mortality had never had a Beginning, and that this heavy and groſs Fleſh had never at all cover'd our glorious Body and Spirit; but that they had ſtill continued pure and naked as God made them. Which indeed is much rather to be wiſhed for than to be bearing upon our heavenly Body this miſerable Lump of Fleſh, and to deſire that it may riſe again to remain Eternally. This is a Mark of the Ignorance and Imbecillity of our Minds, which cannot comprehend the Truth either of Coporeal or Spiritual things, but in a bruiſh Manner go on blindly to believe whatſoever any one can perſwade them to, without ſound Reaſon or Judgment, becauſe of the great Folly which Sin hath brought upon Man; nay, it hath rendred him worſe than fooliſh even in his particular Actions and Conduct.

§. 23. For 'tis moſt certain that Men are Fools in their Minds, and have not ſo much as human Reaſon in the Management of themſelves or their Affairs; both ſaying and doing all that's contrary to their temporal as well as ſpiritual Good: which can't come but of Folly, ſeeing Wiſdom cannot hate it ſelf, nor act any thing againſt it ſelf, yet the natural Man teſtifies by his Actions that he hateth himſelf and ſeeketh not his own Happineſs.

§. 24. For when he ſuffereth himſelf to be governed by his own Paſſions, he ſtumbleth, and falleth into all manner of Miſchief every Step; becauſe the natural Man's Paſſions are inſolent, and do hurry him into very hurtful and dangerous Extremes: if any one eats and drinks according to his Paſſions, he runneth into many Exceſſes which will bring upon him divers Diſeaſes and other Inconveniences: and if he is carried out to Luxury and carnal Pleaſures, he cannot hope for long Life, but muſt expect the Gout and other ſhameful Maladies: Dancing, Feaſting, Hunting, Gaming, make him loſe his Reſt, and inflame his Blood: The Deſires of Honour renders him uneaſie, peeviſh, jealous and fretful: The Love of Riches, cuts him out Work enough to employ his Thoughts Day and Night, and occaſions him continual Cares, Croſſes, and Entanglements which rob him of his Peace. In a Word, all the things which a Man covets thro' Paſſion render him miſerable, tho' at the ſame time he may reckon himſelf happy, to enjoy thoſe Exceſſes, by a broken and perverted Judgment which knoweth not the Truth of Things, and ſo gives up himſelf to be miſled by his Paſſions worſe than the very Beaſts, who by a natural and brutal Inſtinct keep them-

themſelves from ſuch Exceſſes as are hurtful to their Health.

§. 25. Hence 'tis apparent that Men are become more brutiſh in their Reaſon than the Beaſts themſelves, which ſeek more their real Advantage according to Nature than they do; and yet for all this they think themſelves wiſe, and therefore will not be reproved, nor reclaimed, preſuming that their Folly is Wiſdom. And in this their Ignorance they account their Miſeries to be their Happineſs, and believe they are free whilſt they are under the Slavery of their Paſſions which tyrannize over them; ſo very blind are they as to imagine their Chains and Bands to be Liberty, and their Fooliſhneſs Wiſdom.

§. 26. This we ſee even in them that have ſtudied and been educated at Colleges or Univerſities, where they have acquired ſome eminent Titles and Degrees, as of Doctors, Profeſſors, Lawyers, and Phyſicians, for which the vulgar ſort doth generally eſteem them; though oftentimes they bear the Name of Doctor without having any thing in their Minds of ſolid Doctrine, being alſo ignorant in their own Profeſſion and Buſineſs. For having had Occaſion to talk with ſome of thoſe Perſons, I found them but of a ſhallow Judgment and Capacity, and that they had learned but Words, without knowing the Meaning of 'em: others underſtood the Senſe of their Words, but knew it only by Hear-ſay, or for having read it in ſome Authors: And if theſe Authors have failed, their Readers muſt be miſtaken alſo in following them, while they take their erroneous Opinions for Truth, and preach them as Truth to the People. Hence it comes to paſs, that ſo great Numbers of Perſons are deceived at this time, and take a Lie for the Truth almoſt in every thing, ſince there are ſo few who know and poſſeſs the Truth, and ſo many who will not believe in it, becauſe Pride and Ambition do reign in the Hearts of all them that live according to corrupt Nature.

§. 27. They reject the Truth, which they don't underſtand, as Fools always contemn what they know not, and what doth not ſuit with their Fancy: they deſpiſe and abhor ſuch things as not favouring their Pretenſions, and love rather to have ſomething that's good to Eat and Drink, or to recreate themſelves, than to acquire the Wiſdom and Truth of God. And it ſeems the wiſe Men of this Age do juſt the ſame, ſaying, by their Actions; 'What have we to do with Wiſdom and Truth, 'which bring us in no Gain or Advantage? Away with all 'the reſt, we won't ſo much as ſee it. 'Tis enough if we can 'reign in this World; we had rather enjoy our Eaſe and Plea-

'ſure

'ſure than receive this new Light of Truth which God is 'now ſending us. We are content to read our Authors and 'pleaſe our People, that we may have wherewithal to ſup-'port our Character and make the Pot to boyle. I can't ſay, that the learned of our time expreſs themſelves thus in as many Words; but I can eaſily prove that they ſpeak ſo in Effect with Regard to my ſelf, ſeeing they perſecute and oppreſs me becauſe I declare the Truth which I learn of God, and which they ought to receive as a Preſent ſent from Heaven to enlighten Men ſitting in ſo groſs Darkneſs. But on the contrary, they cry out with the Jews, 'Crucifie, Crucifie; 'away with this new Truth: Deſtroy the Perſon by whom 'it is ſent, that we may remain in our Errors and Deceits; 'and the rather, that the People will readily be impoſed upon 'now, ſince we have ſtudied ſo many artificial Reaſons to 'make Falſhood paſs for Truth, and Truth for a Lie. We 'are Maſters in *Iſrael*, and eſteemed as ſuch by the People: 'We muſt ſee to maintain our Honor and Credit, and care-'fully to preſerve our Livings, fearing leſt any thing ſhould 'happen to fail us. Behold how the Wiſe Men now a days trample under Foot the Truth of God, that they may ſtill reign in this World, and alſo endeavour to make it be deſpiſed by their People, preaching in divers places againſt it, that (as the Scripture ſaith) (a) *they may ſhut up the Gate of Heaven againſt others, and neither enter in themſelves.*

§. 28. For which Reaſon, friendly Reader, I don't at all offer this *Renovation of the Goſpel-Spirit* to thoſe obſtinate Spirits, nor yet to them who wilfully adhere to what they have learned in their Books, as the *Jews* did; who continuing reſolutely to cleave to their Laws rejected the Doctrine of Chriſt, perſecuted and affronted his Perſon, and finally put him to Death, becauſe he brought them the Light of Truth: for 'tis probable theſe Wiſe-Men would not reap any Advantage by it, but rather take Offence at every thing they do not underſtand, or are not willing to practiſe; Seeing the Men of this Age are ſo wedded to their Self-Love, that they won't admit of any thing that's contrary thereto, even though their eternal Salvation doth depend upon the Change and forſaking of it.

§. 29. They love rather to Periſh in their Ignorance, than to ſearch for the Truth of God, which they bark at, as Dogs do at People they do not know; loving more their Darkneſs than the Light. This is what *Jeſus Chriſt* told the Jews (b) namely, *that it was their Condemnation, that Light was come in-*

(a) *Mat.* xxiii. 13. (b) *Jo.* iii. 19.

to the World, and that they loved their Darkneſs rather than the Light. And the ſame may be ſaid with better ground of Chriſtians now-a-days, who had rather periſh with the Multitude, than endeavour to be ſaved with Chriſt's little Flock; to which alone it is that I preſent this New-years Gift, and to none elſe: for all ſuch as have choſen their Paradiſe in this World, have nothing to do to read my Writings, ſince they cannot be profitable to them, nor to any but thoſe who do yet love the Truth, and ſo may be touched by it, finding it in theſe Writings. But for all the reſt of the World, I deſpair of 'em while I ſee them loving ſo groſs Darkneſs: and indeed I tremble to behold Mankind running ſo blindly after their Damnation, without any apprehenſions of it: ſo that I am conſtrained to ſay with *Jeſus Chriſt*, (c) *I pray not for the World, but for them which God hath given me out of the World: they were his through his Fear, and he hath given them me, and put them into my Hands to advance them in Chriſtian Perfection. 'Tis for them, O Lord, I pray, that thou would'ſt keep them from the Evil. They were thine, and thou haſt given them to me: all mine is thine, and thine is mine. Sanctifie them thro' thy Truth; thy Word is Truth.*

§. 30. And now at this time I make the ſame Prayer for them that have left the Vanities of the World to follow the Goſpel-Spirit. Theſe are given me, and put into my Hands to cultivate their Souls, and carefully to lead them unto God. For this I endeavour to declare unto them his Truths, as he has diſcover'd them unto me; and in this Treatiſe I will ſpeak very particularly to them, ſhewing them the glorious and perfect State wherein God created them; the Beauty, Strength and Wiſdom they ſhould have had, if they had not faln into Sin, and how they ſhould have been eternally Bleſſed and Happy without ever dying. I will alſo let them ſee the woful Calamities which Sin hath brought upon whole Nature, that it hath covered over our Bodies with Deformity, Stench, and all ſorts of Miſeries, and rendred our Spirits dull, ignorant and wicked; ſo that they have nothing left of addreſs or penetration but to do Evil, being incapable of doing Good, even in the neceſſary Concerns of Life; for we ſee in effect that Men are without Diſcretion in the management of their own Affairs, falling continually from one Fault into another, without precaution or foreſight. For my part, I oftentimes ſtand amazed to ſee the Stupidity and Ignorance of Man's Mind, even in his Conduct with reſpect to temporal Things;

(c) Jo. xvii. 9, &c.

and

and I have many times rebuked my ſelf for ſo palpable Faults as I have committed, and did wonder after I had committed them, abhorring the Miſery which Sin hath brought into Man's Spirit, ſo as to render it more groſs than that of any Beaſt.

§. 31. Which being duly conſidered by well-meaning Perſons, they will eaſily be enclin'd to deteſt Sin, to curſe the Hour in which it entred into *Adam*'s Will, and to ſuſpect all their Thoughts, Words and Actions as ſinful, which certainly they are ſo long as one follows the Motions of his corrupt Nature. For how wiſe ſoever ſuch a one may think himſelf to be, yet he is fooliſh in effect, and committeth but Folly all the Days of his Life, ſince this Corruption can never do good, being accurſed and damned of it ſelf; in which State of Damnation (wherein he was born) he lives and dies, if during this mortal Life he doth not fight againſt his Corruption, that he may come to live again in the Spirit of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

§. 32. This every one of neceſſity muſt do that he may be ſaved, ſince that nothing unclean ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: we muſt be altogether Holy that we may arrive there. And though worldly Men do perſwade themſelves of Salvation while they live according to the motions of their corrupt Nature, yet they're mightily miſtaken, as I ſhall plainly ſhew in the following Treatiſe; for none can ever recover the Love of God which was loſt by Sin, but thoſe who ſhall walk in the ſame way, which *Chriſt* hath trodden and walked in before us. He is the only *Way* and the *Truth* which leads to Salvation, and no Man can enter into it by any other Door but this.

§. 33. All Chriſtians do acknowledge that *Jeſus Chriſt* is the Saviour of the World, notwithſtanding there be few that are willing to take the Remedies which by his Blood, Sufferings and Death he hath prepared for us. They ſay very well that he is our Surety, for this is true: Seeing Man having thrown himſelf into Damnation by Sin, was no more able to recover himſelf than the Rebellious Angels, who will be Devils to all Eternity, becauſe they han't had any to intercede, or obtain their Remiſſion for them: but Men had *Chriſt* for their Brother, (*d*) the firſt born of *Adam* before his Fall, who interpoſing as Mediator obtain'd a conditional Reconciliation for us, that is, provided Man ſhould deny himſelf and his whole Corruption, and abjure and deteſt it as wicked, it being ſo in-

(d) *Heb.* ii. 16.

deed;

deed; and no more follow it in any thing if he would become a new Creature.

§. 34. But this cannot be until he hath mortified and kill'd in himself that old Corruption which *Adam* hath brought into his Nature: for nothing can rise again, if it be not first dead. Ah! how is it possible for any one to live to the Spirit of *J. Christ*, except he die to the Corruption of the old *Adam*? Since these two Spirits are two Contraries which expel and drive out one another, and can no more dwell together in the same Subject, than Water can remain in the Fire. Herein many Persons do deceive themselves, thinking and saying that they are renewed in the Spirit of *Christ*, while in the meantime, they are following the Motions of their corrupt Nature: and in so far do they continue living in Sin and turned away from the Love of God to love themselves: and therefore they cannot be new Creatures while they follow the Inclinations of the Old, which must of Necessity die, that the New may be made to live. Again, these are but the foolish Imaginations of a corrupt Mind, to think that the New Birth consists only in the Will, in fine Speculations and pious Discourses, or in a Belief of the Sentiments of any one party in Religion, or any other prejudices of Spirit; or yet to believe that Regeneration consists in Forms of Worship, Prayers, Works of Charity, or in other the like Offerings to God; since all those things are but accessory, and may be done even by wicked Persons, nay, by the Devil himself.

§. 35. But Regeneration cometh from the great Mercy of God, who thro' the Merits of *Jesus Christ* doth forgive Men *Adam*'s Sin, if they will abhor it in themselves, and no more wilfully commit it. For because all Men were created in *Adam*, they have all Sinn'd in him and contracted his Guilt, all of 'em being certainly damned in him without any exception: but if *Adam* had not Sinn'd, he should have propagated all Men to Salvation, as God had design'd them; yet on condition that every Man in particular should have his time of Tryal assign'd him to testify the fidelity he owed to his God, every one having the same Liberty which *Adam* had to continue firm to the Love of God, or to turn away from it by placing his Affections on himself or the other Creatures; it was in his Power either to damn or save himself during this his time of Probation: Thus every Man could have acted in his own particular, even as *Adam* could in his; and as all those who had kept faithful unto God should have been saved; so on the contrary all who had withdrawn their Affections from him to love any thing else should have been damned, even though *Adam* had

had never ſinn'd; ſo very free and independent were Men during their time of Trial, which is no other than this wherein we live at preſent, and will continue till the Day of Judgment: and Men being then confirmed in Grace, as the faithful Angels have been, they can no more fall away becauſe of their full and perfect Union with God. But ſuch as in this time of Trial ſhall follow their Corruption, and place their Affections in any other thing but God, will find themſelves ſeized and loaded to all Eternity with the Curſes which Sin hath brought into Nature, as being the Part they themſelves have choſen, in contempt of the Graces and Glories which God hath offer'd them, and for which he had created them.

§. 36. So that the whole of Damnation and Salvation conſiſts in this, namely, That Men do either obey the Corruption of their Nature, or follow the Goſpel Spirit, which it hath been always neceſſary to follow in order to be ſaved, even before *Jeſus Chriſt* cloath'd himſelf with our Mortality. For from the beginning of the World it hath always been needful for attaining Salvation to Die in the Love of God, and it will ever be ſo to the end of it; Salvation conſiſting only in Union with God, out of whom all muſt periſh Eternally. The Reaſon why *Jacob*, *Moſes*, *David*, with the other Prophets and Patriarchs, were ſaved, was only becauſe they died in the Love of God, and not upon any other Account; no more ſhall any Chriſtians ever be ſaved if they die out of this Love of God, for whom alone they were created.

§. 37. And therefore 'tis folly for any to hope for Salvation by ſo many different Ways and Means, as Men propoſe at this time one to another, putting ſuch a Senſe on the Commandments of God and the Goſpel-Laws as to abſolve People from their Obligations to keep 'em, and preaching publickly, that 'tis *impoſſible for humane Frailty to obſerve them.*

§. 38. Which is a manifeſt Contempt of God's infinite Love to Men, ſeeing all theſe Laws and Commandments are given us only as proper means of returning to the Love of God, and not for any other end; Since that God has no need of our obſervance of thoſe things, having created us altogether free, without being ſubjected to any Laws, which indeed were occaſion'd only by Sin, and nothing elſe. Hence we ſee that the Divine Laws and Evangelical Counſels are the Effects of God's paternal Care of the Souls of Men; for when he ſaw them periſhing thro' their actual and particular Sins, then he preſcrib'd as many Remedies as their Souls had received Wounds by Sin: according to the diverſity of their Sins, or

ways of departing from his Love, ſo many different Laws did he give them as means of returning to it.

§. 39. And although all thoſe Laws be given to Men only in conſideration of their Frailty, yet ſuch is the blindneſs of their Minds at preſent, as to make them ſay, that *'tis impoſſible for their Frailty to keep theſe Laws*: Which is a damnable Doctrine, leading all thoſe that will follow it into Hell. For 'tis no leſs than Blaſphemy againſt God, to affirm that 'tis impoſſible to keep his Commandments, ſince God can't command things impoſſible, no more than things that are Evil. For indeed all his Laws are good, and holy, and profitable, the true means to reſtore Men to the Love of God; without them all Mankind ſince *Adam* ſhould have periſhed thro' their own Sins, every one having forſaken the Love of God to love ſome other thing beſides him. But God taking Pity of this their Miſery, ſent them *Moſes* with his Statutes as ſo many Chains of his Love, to draw them back again to himſelf through his great Mercy. And whereas Men ought to praiſe him for theſe his Benefits, they truly blaſpheme his Love and the peculiar Care he hath had of them: and that from ſuch blindneſs of Spirit as that the Diſeaſe became then incurable, becauſe they contemned and rejected the true means of Help which God gave them by *Moſes*, looking upon them as inſupportable Yokes, and Burthens heavy to be born. And in this their ingratitude Men waxed worſe and worſe, departing more and more from the Love of their God, and that inſenſibly, without perceiving their Damnation to be unavoidable in the miſerable State wherein they were.

§. 40. But as *Jeſus Chriſt*, after the Fall of *Adam*, interpoſed with his Father and became ſurety for all Men, engaging that if they were yet allowed to live out their time of Trial, they ſhould deteſt their Corruption, and return to the Love of their God: this was granted out of regard to his Merits. He conſtituted himſelf our Bail and Surety, promiſing that Men would do ſo, in caſe they were ſuffered to live after *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion, by which they were all condemned to Hell, and to die an eternal Death; as God had forewarned *Adam*, aſſuring him that if he did eat of the Apple he ſhould die; which happen'd accordingly: Seeing all Men are dead to Grace through the Sin of *Adam*, which Grace they can never recover without returning to the Love of God, which they had forfeited by the Fall of their common Father *Adam*. Therefore every Man in particular ought to labour during this miſerable Life, or this time of his Trial, to recover this Divine Love which was loſt by Sin: this the Apoſtle exhorteth all of

ſis to do, when he ſaith (e) *work out your Salvation with fear and trembling.*

§. 41. But Men do fruſtrate ſuch wholſome Advices to their own Perdition, being willing that *Jeſus Chriſt* their Pledge and Surety ſhould pay for his Surety-ſhip himſelf, and ſo violate the Promiſe made to his Father for Men, namely, that they ſhould labour to recover his Love; ſince they will not do any thing in order to it; but rather endeavour to follow their Corruption, and to carry their Affections towards the Earth more ſtrongly than ever *Adam* did, increaſing his Sin in themſelves daily, yea infinitely, and thereby contemning the Love and tender concern which *Chriſt* hath had for their Salvation. Thus do they wilfully run themſelves headlong into Damnation, after that *Chriſt* had delivered them from it, and obtain'd the prolonging of their Life, that they might do Penance, and return into a State of Grace; which through his Merits was reſtor'd unto them, immediately after *Adam*'s Fall: For God did then give unto Men Grace to enable them to do Penance, to be reconciled to God, and to recover his Love which was loſt by Sin.

§. 42. But Men abuſing all thoſe Graces which *Jeſus Chriſt* their Brother hath obtain'd of his Eternal Father for them, do baffle the Promiſes which he had made in their behalf; deſiring rather to rule in this World than to ſuffer in it, for accompliſhing their Penitence, and labouring to recover the Grace forfeited by *Adam*'s Sin. They would be paſſing away this time of Trial, which God hath ſo mercifully vouchſafed them through the Merits of his Son *Jeſus Chriſt*, in Eaſe, Reſt and Pleaſure, while their charitable Brother ſuffers and finds himſelf oblig'd to undergo the Puniſhments due to their Sins: at which theſe ungrateful Wretches do rejoyce, ſaying as ſo many Mockers, that they honour *Jeſus Chriſt* in aſcribing the Glory of their Salvation to him, believing that he hath ſatisfied all for them, and delivered them from Damnation. A thing which makes all my Bones to ſhake, my Fleſh to tremble, and my Hair to ſtand up with Amazement at the thoughts of this ſhameful Ingratitude towards a God-Man: becauſe God hath manifeſted unto me that his well-beloved Son, out of pure Charity, voluntarily conſtituted himſelf our Pledge and Surety, promiſing that Men ſhould return to his Love, provided they were allow'd Grace and time to Repent or do Penance. And after that *Jeſus Chriſt* hath purchas'd for all Men this Grace and Favour, yet they go to deſpiſe it, and

(e) *Phil.* ii. 12.

would have their Surety pay their Debts himſelf, and do in his Perſon alone that which every one ought to do in particular; namely, to labour for recovering the Love of God which was loſt through Sin, and by Penitence to lament the loſs of this Grace during their time of Probation, as *Adam* did, who mourned and labour'd all the time of his mortal Life, doing Penance for his Fall; which Penance God had enjoyn'd him in Faithfulneſs and Juſtice coupled with his great Mercy, having changed the Eternal Puniſhment which his Sin had deſerved, into a temporal one much leſs, and of ſo very ſhort continuance in reſpect of Eternity.

§. 43. But theſe unthankful Creatures would be laying all their Sins and Pollutions upon *Chriſt*'s Shoulders, deſiring that he ſhould bear the juſt Puniſhment of them in their Names, and yet with all this obtain for them the Love of God which may ſave them at Death. But this is altogether extravagant, and were great injuſtice in it ſelf, which is a thing God can never do; knowing that his Son *Jeſus Chriſt* out of pure Charity hath interceeded with him for all Men, giving himſelf to be their Bail and Caution, in hopes of their Converſion and Repentance, and that they would do their utmoſt to retrieve the Love of God loſt by *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion. How unjuſt a thing were it, if ſuch a Charity muſt be puniſhed and charg'd with all the Pains and Chaſtiſements which are due to the Sins of ſuch unthankful Criminals! This were even intolerable in one Man towards another, if after having received a great deal of Favour and Good-will from his Friend, he ſhould yet oblige him to bear his particular Burthens, and pay his proper Debts, for which he became Surety out of pure Friendſhip, and without any Intereſt of his own. How much more then ought Men to be blamed for acting ſo towards *Chriſt* their Saviour, who hath obtain'd for them the pardon of their Sins, on condition they will be Converted and do Penance in this their ſhort Life-time; and yet theſe Wretches dealing deceitfully with Him, do deſire to reign in this World, and to take their Eaſe and Pleaſure to the utmoſt of their Power, ſeeking to Rejoyce and Recreate themſelves inſtead of Weeping, and to continue in their Sins inſtead of amending them? And notwithſtanding all this, they will ſtill preſume on a bleſſed Eternity for the future! which will moſt certainly fail them; for God cannot be deceived nor mock'd!

§. 44. He will do Juſtice to the Wicked, and render to every one according to his Works. Such as have kept the Promiſe made by *Jeſus Chriſt*, and done Penance in this Val-

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ley of Tears, ſhall go with him into the Glory of their Father; but they who ſhall deſpiſe the Mercy which God hath ſhewed them, in pardoning their Sins thro' the Mediation of *Chriſt*, upon Condition of their Repentance, and love rather to take their Pleaſure than to ſuffer in this World; ſhall receive to all Eternity the Puniſhment due to their Offences. They have choſen the Pleaſures of this ſhort Life, and therefore have no Right to expect another Paradiſe, but eſpecially Chriſtians, who know how *Chriſt* lived and convers'd whilſt in this World, that he groan'd, and wept, and labour'd, and choſe the leaſt of every thing for his Uſe, even He to whom the very beſt did belong, as King, Maſter and Lord of all things: nevertheleſs he took upon him the Form of a Servant, the Appearance of a Sinner, the Reproach of a Malefactor; in a Word, he ſo far humbled and annihilated himſelf, that he call'd himſelf *a Worm, and no Man, a Reproach of Men, and deſpiſed of the People.* (f) All to give us an Example; and ſhew us by what means we ſhould pleaſe or ſatisfie God, and recover his Love which was loſt by Sin. Behold, how *Jeſus Chriſt* hath redeemed and deliver'd us from Death and Hell, by coming to teach us the Ways and Means of renouncing the Corruption which Sin hath brought into our Nature, and of recovering the former Favour and Love of God forfeited by our Apoſtacy from him. This is not, as ſome ignorant People would have us believe, that *Chriſt* came into this lower World to ſave them that reſolve to follow the Inclinations of their corrupt Nature; for the Apoſtle affirmeth (g) that *If you live according to the Fleſh, ye ſhall die; but if thro' the Spirit, ye do mortifie the Deeds of the Body, ye ſhall live.* Hence he plainly ſheweth, that ſuch as live after the Fleſh ſhall not enjoy the Benefit of Chriſt's Merits, nor be ſaved by him, except they mortifie in themſelves the Deeds of the Fleſh with its Affections and Luſts.

§. 45. This is what Chriſtians at preſent are far enough from doing, who hope for Salvation thro' the Merits of Jeſus *Chriſt*, and yet ſtudy to the utmoſt of their Power to find out Means of living after the Fleſh, and doing all they can to pamper and gratifie it in this World, though their Father *Adam* was condemned with all his Poſterity for having placed his Affections in ſome other thing but God; for he was no Thief, nor Whoremonger, nor tainted with any outward or material Sins; neither was it becauſe he had only eaten of the forbidden Fruit: but he loſt himſelf and all Mankind for

(f) *Pſ.* xxii. 6. (g) *Rom.* viii. 13.

having withdrawn his Affections from God to take his Pleasure in the Creatures, which God had created for the Comfort and Nourishment of Man: These he might have used and possess'd without giving in his Affections to them, which ought to remain fixt on God alone, seeing he was created solely for this End, as are also all other Men descended of him, who ought not at all to walk four Ways, there being no other that can save them but only this, *of returning to the Love of God*: out of this *Jesus Christ* himself could not be saved, neither could any of the Prophets, Patriarchs, Apostles or Martyrs; neither the Virgin *Mary*, nor any of the Saints, had they not died in the Love of God.

§. 45. How then should the Christians at this time possibly come to Salvation, who live and die in the Love of themselves and of other Creatures lower than themselves? There must needs be very great Fraud in the Doctrines of Men at present, who teach all Sorts of People, both the Good and the Bad, that they shall be saved thro' the Merits of *Jesus Christ*, provided they do simply believe in him; for if this Belief were enough, to what End did *Christ* command every one (g) *To deny himself, take up his Cross, and follow him: To repent, to forsake all things; declaring that he that forsaketh not Father and Mother, Wife and Children for his Name-Sake, is not worthy of him?* To what End, I say, are so many Evangelical Counsels and Advices, so many Means of Salvation, so many Precepts and Ordinances given to Men, if they can be saved by this only one Belief in *Christ*? All the rest then must be superfluous and of no Use, if this perverse Doctrine were true, that *Jesus Christ* hath done and satisfied all for Men.

§. 46. It is certainly true, that *Jesus Christ* did ransom all Men in general, when they were all lost in *Adam*; Seeing he did not then obtain Mercy of his Father for *Peter* or *John*, but for all Men in common that ever should spring from *Adam*, because all and every one had perished in him before they did actually subsist; being all yet in his Seed there could be no Exception of particular Persons; since at that time there was none but one, who bore in his Loyns all the Rest of Mankind, excepting *Jesus Christ* alone, who was already brought forth before the Fall of *Adam*, and could not sin in him, having proceeded from him before he withdrew his Affections from God to place them in the Creatures. Therefore he is truly and justly called the only Son of *God*, as being the only Man that was born without Sin, whenas all other Men are

(g) *Matt.* x. 38. *Luk.* xiv. 33.

born

born Children of Wrath and Perdition, and ſhould all have periſhed and been damned had it not been for the Merits of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who interpoſing with his Father for us, did purchaſe our Redemption, not only thro' his Sufferings and Death; but from the very inſtant that *Adam* fell into Diſgrace with God, *Chriſt* interceeds for us, and obtains our Pardon upon Condition of doing Penance; therefore he ſaith in his Goſpel, (*h*) *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh*: becauſe our Penitence ceaſing, the Pardon ceaſeth alſo, which was only conditional, and this doth ratifie the Promiſe he had made to his Eternal Father on our Behalf.

§. 47. For if this Condition of Penitence had not been annexed to our Pardon, why ſhould *Adam* have wept and toil'd and labour'd ſo much ſo many Years? He might then, the Moment he received his Pardon, enjoy the Delights of *Paradiſe* as he had done before his Sin: and if ſo, he had not been ſubjected to Cold and Heat, and all the other Calamities of Body and Mind, as we all are at this Day. Which ſhould not at all have been, if God had been willing by his abſolute Power to pardon Man his Sins without the Condition of doing Penance. He had reſtored all things, (at the very inſtant he forgave Man his Sin, and that more eaſily than he had created them out of nothing) to their former Perfection; by removing abſolutely the Curſe which Sin had brought upon all Nature. For he was able to confirm Man in Grace as ſoon as he had pardon'd him, as he had done by the faithful Angels, ſeparating the Rebellious, and confining them to all the Maledictions which their Sins had occaſion'd. Juſt ſo God might have acted in the ſame manner with Reſpect to Man, had not he been willing that he ſhould do Penance for his Sin; he might have reſtored him into his former State of Grace, and taken away from Nature all the Maledictions which Sin had brought into it, leaving Man at his Eaſe to enjoy the Merits of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who had deliver'd him from Damnation, ſince without thoſe Merits *Adam* could not be ſaved, nor any of his Poſterity, and all Mankind ſhould have gone down into Hell without any Remiſſion; from which Misfortune *Jeſus Chriſt* hath preſerved them, and obtain'd Mercy for them, provided they would do Penance during this ſhort Life, and no otherwiſe. For if *Chriſt* had procured of his Eternal Father the Remiſſion of Man's Sin without Penitence; we may eaſily believe that *Adam* with all the Holy Prophets, Patriarchs, Apoſtles, Martyrs, and the many other

(h) *Luk.* xiii. 3, 5. vulg. *Niſi pœnitentiam egeritis.*

Saints, the Friends of God and Diſciples of *Jeſus Chriſt*, ſhould not have accompliſh'd in themſelves this Penitence; Seeing they were more capable of enjoying *gratis* the Merits of Chriſt, than theſe wicked Perſons whom they would now be perſwading, that they ſhall be ſaved thro' his Merits without doing Penance while they go on daily to increaſe their Sins, and follow the Motions of their corrupt Nature. For *Adam* and all thoſe Holy Perſons were more diſpoſed to apply to themſelves the Merits of *Chriſt*, being the Friends of God (as *Adam* after he had obtain'd Pardon was reſtored into his Favour) than the Men who are out of his Favour, and live in Sin; tho' *Adam* found himſelf oblig'd, even after he was forgiven, to do Penance more than nine hundred Years. Have not the Holy Prophets of God endur'd in this World all manner of Contempt, Perſecution, Poverty, Miſery, and even Death it ſelf; for *Elias* in his Complaint to God, ſaid, (i) *That they had killed all his Prophets, and that he only was left alive?* The Apoſtles of *Jeſus Chriſt* have ſuffered no leſs neither; ſeeing they ſaid (k) that *Their Lives were ſpent in Pains and Labors, in Fears, Perſecutions, Anxieties and Diſtreſſes*; and almoſt all of 'em were put to Death for adhering to the Truth. And in like manner all their Diſciples, the Martyrs and Saints who ſucceeded them, have been in continual Sufferings, ſpending even the laſt Drop of their Blood for a Teſtimony of the Love which they bore to God. And indeed we don't read of any one of the Friends of God that hath not undergone great Sufferings and Penances in this World.

§. 48. Which is a thing that ſerves abundantly to diſcover the deceitful Doctrine of Men at this time, who perſwade one the other that they ſhall be ſaved thro' the Merits of *Chriſt* without doing Penance, without hating Sin, or being turned unto God; and even while they're living according to their brutiſh Paſſions, or the Inclinations of their corrupt Natures; having taken in ſome Imaginary Notions of Chriſt's Merits to ſeduce the World, thro' the ſpecious Appearances of attributing their Salvation wholly to his Merits; which ought really to be aſcribed to him, as well as the Salvation of all that ever ſhall be ſaved, but not in the Manner that thoſe Interpreters pretend, as if *Chriſt* had come into this World to authorize their Sins, and that they might ſtill go on to tranſgreſs the more; as we ſee in effect that Men do at this time; ſince they grow daily worſe and worſe, nay, every Moment,

(i) 1 *King.* xix. 14. (k) 1 *Cor.* iv. 10, 11, &c. 2 *Cor.* iv. 8, 9, &c. — vi. 4, 5, &c.

tho'

tho' in the mean while, they promiſe themſelves Salvation thro' the Merits of *Jeſus Chriſt*, as they make one the other to believe, ſaying; 'That God is good, and knoweth the Fra-'ilty of Men: Which is true, for were not he good and merciful, he would have damned all Mankind in general, immediately after their Sin, without allowing them time to repent, and do Penance; and had not he known Mens Frailty, he would not have ſent them ſo many Prophets and holy Perſons in his own Name, to perſwade Men in all Ages by pious Admonitions and Examples of good Living to return to God: And laſt of all, if he had not had Regard to Mens Weakneſs, he would not have ſent them his Well-Beloved Son to take a frail and mortal Body like that of Men, to the End he might teach them by his Example what they ought to do and leave undone according to their weak Capacities, and what Way they ſhould walk in to return to the Love of God, to which they ſhall certainly come by uſing the Means which he came to ſhew them, as *denying themſelves, contemning the periſhable Riches of this Life, and breaking off their Affections from every thing that is not God.* Behold, this is what *Jeſus Chriſt* came to teach Men to do, and that more by his Example than Precept, becauſe of their Frailty; but not that they ſhould fancy that he did theſe things to free them from doing ſo themſelves, like as ſome have fooliſhly imagined to their own Deſtruction: ſince the Doctrine, Merits and Sufferings of *Chriſt* will in no wiſe profit them who are not his Followers, and do not to the utmoſt of their Power embrace a Life of Penitence; fighting againſt the Corruption of their Natures, and renouncing their own Wills: for he hath given his Laws and Counſels to Men only that they might obſerve and keep them, according to what *David* ſaid to the Lord, (l) *Thou haſt given us thy Commandments that we may keep them diligently.*

§. 49. For God hath given his Divine Precepts and Evangelical Counſels to Men, all to the ſame End, namely, that they ſhould keep them faithfully; not that they ſhould ſlight and contemn them, as a great many do, who ſay; 'They are 'too frail for thoſe Obſervances: which is as much as to ſay, that they are too frail to be ſaved, ſeeing there is no Salvation without the Obſervance of thoſe things, becauſe of our humane Frailty: for were not Man ſo very weak, or were he able to recover the Love of God without obſerving his Commands or Evangelical Laws, he ſhould have no need of that Strictneſs in keeping all the Circumſtances of thoſe Laws in particular, ſince it is a kind of Servitude to live under Laws: but this

(l) *Pſal.* cxix. 4.

Servi-

Servitude is so necessary for his Frailty, that it should certainly perish were it not tied to God by the Bands of his Laws. For had not Man been frail, he should not have wanted any Laws. Thus when God created him, he gave him no Laws, and all the sorts of Laws which he hath given to Men, have proceeded from their Sins; for he had made them as 'twere little Gods, subject to nothing but their Creator, and therefore they needed not any Laws, Commands or Force to constrain them to any thing, but were capable of doing whatsoever they would in Heaven and on Earth: yea, I believe that Angels were created to serve Man, and do his Will, which was united to the Will of God without Subjection to any thing else. But since Man hath turned away his Affections from God, he hath lost all those Prerogatives, and is fall'n into all sorts of Evil and Sin, even without knowing it; so far hath his Soul been blinded thro' Sin, that he did not so much as see the Misery into which he fell, had it not been that God of his Mercy had given him Commands, and forbidden him as many Evils as he had committed without knowing them.

§. 50. And that which *God hath done to help this Ignorance and Frailty*, Men *now a Days call heavy Burthens, insupportable to their Frailty, and say, that they cannot* keep the Commandments of God, nor observe the Law of the Gospel. Hence it is evident, that they are given up to the Spirit of Error and Lying; for truly there is nothing more sweet, better, and more pleasant, than the Observance of those Laws, which give Joy to the Heart and Tranquillity to the Mind of those who observe them. And the Laws of God are incomparably more easie to be observed than the Laws of the World or those of corrupt Nature, which do often grieve the Heart, hurt the Body, disquiet the Mind, and disturb the Spirit of those who are enslaved to them: and yet they do not say that the Laws of the World, or those of corrupt Nature, are impossible to be observed, as they say of Gods Laws, which are ten thousand times more easie and pleasant: for JesusChrist says,(m) that *His Yoke is easie and his Burthen is light*. But the Soul perverted by Sin, counts bitter, sweet; and sweet, bitter, without any true discerning, and Men lead one another in this Darkness, and follow Lies rather than Truth, and do more love Evil in doing their own Wills, than Good by fulfilling Gods Will: and thus they go on from Evil to worse without any Dread, because there are now so many false Prophets, who say,(n) *Peace and Safety*, where the Danger is evident: and it is of our times that *David* says, (o) *The Lord knows the Thoughts of Men*

(m) *Matt.* xi. 30. (n) 1 *Thess.* v. 3. (o) *Ps.* xciv. 12. that

that they are vain. How many Doctors and Preachers are there now a days who teach, *That we cannot obey the Commands of God, and far less the Law of the Gospel?* and who perswade the People of this that they may seduce them? For this is no Ways true, for indeed all those Laws are good and easie to be observed by him who will return to the Love of God: for there is nothing to be done by him, but to turn away from Evil, and to resist his Corruption; then the Soul falls of it self into Good, living happy and contented in this World, in Expectation of Eternal Life. But Souls *which live according to the Flesh cannot please God*, saith the Apostle; and therefore cannot attain to Salvation; *but they who are Christ's have crucified the Flesh, with its Affections and Lusts.* And therefore, Friendly Reader, read attentively this RENOVATION OF THE GOSPEL SPIRIT, and there you will find the only Way of Salvation, since there is no other but that of being born again into the Spirit of Jesus Christ, out of which none ever could or shall be saved.

§. 51. The Friends of God, the Prophets and Patriarchs of the old Law, had not the Evangelical Doctrine particularly delivered to them, but they must of Necessity have died in the Spirit of that Doctrine in Substance. God did not see it necessary to give unto the Patriarchs all the Gospel Laws in particular, since they were not polluted with such Sins as are the Christians, who covet Wealth in abundance, and are lifted up in Glory and Pride, seeking to be serv'd and honoured as much as is possible; whereas we read that the ancient Patriarchs and Prophets were poor and humble, and if they needed to possess any thing for the Maintenance of their Families, it was only Cattel and things necessary for Subsistance, without trading or making Voyages to heap up Money, as Christians do now a days, who spend their whole Life in covering of Riches, and place all their Affections in them: whereas the Prophets were humble, and laboured, and served themselves; as we read that *Habakkuk* was taken up by the Angel, when he was carrying Meat to his Workmen. *Jacobs* Sons were keeping Cattel in the Fields when they sold their Brother *Joseph*; And *Jacob* kept Sheep and served *Laban.* In short, we find in the old Testament, that Men were not covetous of Wealth, that they served themselves, and were not proud and ambitious. Therefore God did not prescribe them the Law of voluntary Poverty, nor that of being humble in Heart, or of chusing the last Place: nor did he command them to serve themselves: since they did all these things in substance, and had no need of Laws to be constrained to them.

§. 52.

§. 52. But after that the Jews, who were God's People, were become licentious in all these kinds of Sins, and had entirely forgotten God, that they might love themselves, and Glory and Pride themselves in the Honour, Joys and Pleasures of this Life, and placed all their Affections upon Gold and Silver and other Lusts, without knowing that all these things were Sins, since they were not forbidden by their Law; Jesus Christ had Pity of their Ignorance, offererd himself to his Father for them, prayed that he would permit him to cloath himself with our Mortality, to the End he might rescue Men, his Brethren, from their Ignorance, and shew them by a visible and mortal Body like their own, all that they ought to do and avoid, for recovering the Love of God, and his Grace, which they had so shamefully lost thro' Ignorance, and had not conceived that the coveting the Riches, Honours or Pleasures of this Life could have rendred them the Enemies of God, or occasion'd their Damnation. This no Body could make them comprehend, if Jesus Christ himself had not come to shew them by a lively Example, how they were quite lost, and become the Enemies of God, by turning away their Affections from him to place them on themselves, and on so many other things which are not God: tho' they were all created to love him with all their Heart, as it was also written in the Decalogue of the Ten Commandments. But these ignorant Persons did fancy that they loved God, tho' with their whole Heart and Affections they were turned towards earthly things, and tho' they worshipped God with their Lips only, their Hearts being far from him; which they did not perceive, but lived thus freely according to the Lust of the Flesh, without remembring the End for which they were created by God, that is, to love him. And this their Forgetfulness and Ignorance moved the charitable Heart of Jesus Christ to become Man like them, that he might take them by the Hand, and lead them himself in the Way to Salvation, from which they had ignorantly strayed, and could not return to the Love of God, as Jesus Christ, from the time that *Adam* sinned, had become Surety for them that they should do. And tho' God had at sundry times sent Prophets to call them back to his Love, yet Men had always run farther from it, and had no Regard either to the Threatnings or Promises which God made them by his Prophets: so that Jesus Christ found himself obliged, out of the Love he had for Men, to cloath himself with their Mortality, and to cover his Glorious Body with the Sack-Cloth of Corruption (as all other Men were cloath'd with it by Sin) that

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by this means he might deliver his Brethren from their Blindneſs, and redeem them the ſecond time from that Damnation into which they had, each of them, plung'd themſelves by their own Sins, which were far more heinous than that of *Adam*; for he never fell into the Luſt of Riches, ſince all was his without coveting it; nor into the Pride of Life, ſince he was the moſt noble and honourable of all the Creatures; neither could he ſin by ſeeking Delights and Pleaſures for his Body, for he poſſeſt in himſelf alone all the Pleaſures and Delights of the World. But his Poſterity has coveted all theſe things, when it was not lawful for them to have them; ſeeing, after they became ſinful, they would but abuſe them, and appropriate them to themſelves, fancying that they deſerved them, and that they belonged to them in Property: and they would not make uſe of them, without ſetting their Hearts upon them, inſtead of reſerving theſe entirely for God. And theſe Wounds of their Souls would have been mortal, if this Divine Phyſician had not deſcended upon the Earth to heal and cure them, bringing along with him the Bleſſing of God upon his Remedies, for thoſe who were willing to take them heartily and apply them to their ſeveral Caſes.

§. 53. But theſe Remedies have not profited thoſe who deſpiſed them, or who ſay, as the Chriſtians do now a-days, *that Jeſus Chriſt has ſuffered for them, that they will ſuffer nothing; but will be ſaved by the merits of Jeſus Chriſt; believing they honour and pleaſe him for making him pay their Debts, and bear the puniſhment due to their Sins:* It is very lamentable to ſee that the Devil has now ſo much Power over the Minds of Men, as to perſwade them to things ſo falſe, ſo cruel and unreaſonable: as if *Jeſus Chriſt* had come to pay the Puniſhment due to their Sins, that they might take the greater Liberty to commit them, and to continue in them all their Lifetime, while they behold *Jeſus Chriſt* endure and ſuffer Death for them: and all the requital that Men give him, is to ſay, that they aſcribe the honour of their Salvation to the Merits of *Jeſus Chriſt*: as if he could be honoured by bearing their Sin and their Filth; and as if it were reaſonable that the Juſt ſhould ſuffer for the Sins of the Guilty. Which would be a Cruelty, even before Men: how then could it be juſt before God, the Righteous Judge, *who will render to every one according to his Works?* Since the Scripture ſays (*r*), *that by our works we ſhall be judged, and by our works we ſhall be condemned*, and this ſince *Jeſus Chriſt* was cloathed with our Mortality. Which ſhews the falſhood of that Doctrine, that Jeſus Chriſt has ſatisfied all for Men: Since they ſhall be judged accord-

(r) *Rom.* ii. 6. *Matt.* xii. 37.

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ing to their Works, and not according to the Merits of *Jesus Christ*, after the manner that those blind Men would apply them: since it would be very cruel that Jesus Christ, who is so holy and perfect, who never sinn'd, should bear the Punishment due to the Sins of Criminals who are hardned in their Sins, and will not forsake them. And what reason were there that *Jesus Christ* should suffer for those Criminals, who by their Deeds despise his Law and Doctrine, throw it from off their Shoulders as insupportable to them; and while by their Mouth they own it as Christians, by their Works they do entirely destroy this Law of *Jesus Christ*, having it in Contempt and Scandal, as the Apostle says: (a) that *Christ was a Stumbling Block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Gentiles*? It seems those inconsiderate Persons do imagine that *Christ* stood in great need of them, since he suffered so much, and gave his Life to redeem them, while they themselves will not do the least thing for their Salvation, but are resolved to Lord it both in this World and in that to come, with the Goods and Merits of another. Bankrupts are greatly blam'd who do thus; and their Creditors give them a thousand Curses when they see them Domineer and Swagger, after their going off, more than formerly, with the Wealth, of which they have wickedly rob'd them: Men now adays do the very same, who will have *Jesus Christ* to have paid all for them, and do therefore Lord it more, than before the Death of Christ: for then Men did not so much despise God as they do now: for those of former times did observe as far as they could the Commandments of God, at least the good Men among them, whereas those who bare that Name at present, say, that the Yoke of his Commands cannot be born, and that they cannot keep them, and far less the Evangelical Law: for Pastors and Preachers do publickly Preach and Write that *the Commandments cannot be kept*.

§. 54. By which we may clearly perceive that (b) *the abomination of desolation is now in the Sanctuary*. For what more horrible abomination than to train up People in so false and abominable a Doctrine, that after God out of the pure Love he had for them, had given them Commandments, whereby to make them discover the Sins they had committed through Ignorance and Frailty, without perceiving that these turn'd them away from the Love they ow'd to God; these Men have been so wretched as to say, *that those Laws are insupportable to them*? It is just as if they should say, *that it*

(a) 1 Cor. i. 23. (b) *Matth.* xxiv. 15.

is impossible they should be saved: Seeing the Salvation of all Men consists in this, *viz.* to cease to do Evil, and to do Good; and God commands no other thing: for of the ten Commandments there are two only which enjoyn to do good, and the other eight require the ceasing to do Evil.

§. 55. This is what God had not in expres Terms forbidden Man before his Sin; for 'twas Sin only that occasion'd all those Laws, which were given by God because of the diverse Sins which Men had voluntarily committed through Ignorance and humane Frailty; they not knowing the Frailty of their Nature since *Adam*'s Sin, and not thinking that it was so ill done to follow their natural Inclinations, and the sudden Fits of their Passions: they would kill when they were angry; they would steal when they coveted; they would follow their carnal Pleasures when they were mov'd to it; they would covet their Neighbour's Wife and Goods when those were pleasing to them; they would bear false Witness that they might compass their Designs; they would lightly take the Name of God in vain, neglecting to Worship him: Therefore God, as a gentle Father, did let them know, in order to their eternal Good, that they must Love him with all their Heart, since this Love was the End and the Ground of their Creation: And God warns them that they do no Evil, because this would deprive them of Eternal Bliss. And these Fatherly Warnings are now looked upon by Men as Cruelties, and as if God had laid Burthens upon Men with which he had overcharg'd them: tho' all is done only for their Comfort and Assistance, that by these Laws they may be brought back into the right Way of Salvation.

§. 56. Think a little, my dear Reader, upon the Ingratitude of Men now a days, who say, that it is impossible for them to love a God so good, and so bountiful to them; and consider if it be impossible for them to forbear to kill, to steal, to whore, to swear, to covet, to take the Name of God in vain, &c. Which are all of them things forbidden by the Ten Commandments, which ought in all Ages and always to be observed in Substance, in order to Salvation: for Men can by no other Means return to the Love of God, but by things contrary to those which have withdrawn them from it. Their ceasing to do well, and the Evil which they have done, has rob'd them of the Grace and *Love of God*; and they can never recover it but by ceasing to do those Evils, and returning to this Love. If Men will flatter themselves for their own Ruine, they have themselves to blame, for God is not wanting to them, he gives them a full Measure, and declares to them

them at preſent his infallible Truths. If they will perſiſt in the Errors and Darkneſs which the Learned will have them believe, I muſt leave them to their Liberty, ſince God has created them Free; but I warn them of the Perils and Dangers in which they are, amidſt ſo many evil Doctrines which blind their Eyes to make them believe a Lie. And I may very well ask Chriſtians now as the Apoſtle once did (c); *Who hath bewitched your Minds that you abide in Darkneſs, whilſt the Truth of God appears as bright as the Sun at Noon-day?* They may ſee it with their Eyes, hear it with their Ears, and feel its Teſtimony in their Conſciences; there remains nothing but to lay it to Heart, and to put it in Practice.

§. 57. I have pointed out the right way by this *Renovation of the Goſpel-Spirit* which God will make upon the Earth, for all thoſe who are willing to embrace it. The Buſineſs is not to diſpute any longer about the different Opinions of Religion or of Belief. Men muſt be born again in the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, or deſcend into Hell; for he is come at the laſt Hour, and has brought us the laſt Remedies for our Salvation. We muſt not look for others, for God has already thrice redeemed Men by the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, delivering them from the Damnation into which they had caſt themſelves. The firſt time was when *Adam* fell into Sin and Damn'd himſelf with all his Poſterity. The ſecond was when Men damned themſelves by their own Sins, after having received from God ſo many Helps, Inſtructions and Laws, by *Moſes* and the other Prophets; all which were deſpiſed by Men, who ſaid, as the Blind now adays do, that they could not obey the Laws of God; for they loved rather to follow their own brutal Nature, than to uſe the Remedies for their Diſeaſes, which were preſcrib'd in the Law of *Moſes*.

§. 58. Though theſe Laws were many, and there were many Circumſtances to be obſerved in them, yet nevertheleſs they were not impoſſible, as thoſe ignorant Men would have perſwaded themſelves; for there was nothing in *Moſes*'s Law that did ſurpaſs the Strength of a natural Man: there was nothing but good Order and Meaſure in all things appointed by God for the good both of Mens Souls and Bodies: for he had no need that they ſhould obſerve all thoſe Laws, he being the ſoveraign God, independent from all things. And he has not one Degree leſs of Glory, whether Men obſerve his Laws or not; yea, though they ſhould all deſcend into Hell, God would be no leſs Glorious: He is able to create yet a thouſand Worlds, and a hundred Millions of other Creatures than Men, to be loved by them, and to glorify his holy Name; ſo

(c) *Gal.* iii. 1.

that

that he had no need to ask any thing of Man, or to give him Laws whereby to draw him to his Love. But it was a great Favour that Man received from God, that he was pleaſed to call him back again for the ſecond time by ſuch wholſome Laws and Precepts, that Man needed only to embrace and follow them for the attainment of Salvation, even after he had undone himſelf by his own Sins, and altogether neglected God, and deſpiſed his Laws and Ordinances, which were deſign'd as Remedies for his Maladies; but he would not make uſe of them, but loved rather to periſh in Ignorance, than by Laws to learn the Remedies of his Salvation.

§. 59. But ſeeing this Wickedneſs proceeded from Ignorance and humane Frailty, through which Men followed the Motions of their corrupt Natures, as the Beaſts do, not perceiving that they did Evil, Jeſus Chriſt had compaſſion on them, and would needs redeem them the ſecond time, that they might not periſh for ever. He obtain'd therefore from his Father a ſecond Mercy and Grace by which they might do Penance, and amend their Sins committed through Ignorance; and he gave them his Divine Light to diſcover them, and his Example to amend them. But thoſe ingrateful *Jews*, inſtead of receiving Jeſus Chriſt as their Saviour and Benefactor, fall upon him, perſecute him, bitterly defame and reproach him, and at laſt put him to Death, ſaying, That he had come to deſtroy God's Law. But this was nothing but a falſe Pretext: for Jeſus Chriſt did fulfil the whole Jewiſh Law, as a Jew: but moreover he ſhewed them the Sins they had committed againſt God from the time that thoſe ancient Laws had been given them; and let them ſee how Pride, Covetouſneſs, Luxury, and many other Vices had encreas'd among them, from the time that *Moſes* gave them ſo many Precepts and Statutes, which ſerved for no other end but to recal their Minds which ſtrayed ſo much from God, and were continually buſied and taken up about the Cares of this Life, in a forgetfulneſs of God.

§. 60. Which *Moſes* perceiving, he, with the conſent of God, gave them Precepts concerning all their Words and Actions, ſetting down to them in Writing, how they ought to be apparell'd, how to adorn their Temples and Houſes, what they muſt Eat, how they muſt Cleanſe and Purifie themſelves, how they muſt Pray and obſerve ſo many kinds of Ceremonies: and all this to engage their Minds to a continual Remembrance of God in all that they did and ſaid; that their Souls might not be left Idle and Empty, nor their Minds diſtracted and

taken up about the Cares of the natural Life; but that they might rather retain the Remembrance of God, and think on him in their daily Buſineſs, as they all did, when *Moſes* was ſent unto them. And this wandring from, and Forgetfulneſs of God, could not be amended but by groſs, ſenſible and natural means: for they had ſo loſt the Divine Light, that by it they could not comprehend any thing. It was needful to ſpeak to them of Meats, Garments, outward Ceremonies, material Words, houſhold Furniture, Veſſels, and all the things which they made Uſe of in the Suſtentation of their Life, or the Salvation of their Souls. And for thoſe who were deſirous to pleaſe God, this was the true Way to call back their Thoughts which wandred from him, by making them think continually, how they ought to behave themſelves in their eating, Drinking, Sleeping, praying, *&c.* that they might be acceptable to God, and obſerve his Statutes.

§. 61. By this Way they might be kept in continual Prayer, as Jeſus Chriſt did afterwards enjoyn Chriſtians, (a) *That they ſhould always pray, and not faint.* The *Jews* were alſo taught this by their outward Ceremonies, which were nothing elſe but *continual Prayers.* For if they had obſerved all the Circumſtances of the Law of *Moſes*, they could not but have had their Minds always elevated unto God, and in this only continual Prayer doth conſiſt; for it is nothing but an Elevation of the Mind to God in Oblivion of created things.

§. 62. But thoſe perverſe Jews did often murmur againſt God and againſt *Moſes*, for having given them Laws ſo hard to be obſerved; for they did not conſider that thoſe Laws were neceſſary for the State of their Souls, and that they were given them by God out of pure Love, that he might recover them from their Strayings, and make them remember him in all their Actions. This they ought to have valued as a high Favour, and Day and Night to have bleſt him for ſuch a Benefit; and that he had ſuch Fatherly Care for them as that he would call them back, and not let them periſh in their Wandrings, and that Forgetfulneſs of God into which they had fallen.

§. 63. For their Souls had as much need of the continual Remembrance of thoſe Laws, as their Bodies needed the continual Uſe of Bread for their Food, becauſe their Souls were become altogether Earthly and Natural, and ſo could never recover the Divine and Supernatural Love of God, but by groſs and viſible Means, which might move their Senſes to a continual Remembrance of him. For if thoſe Ceremonies had been obſerved only in the Worſhip of God and in their Prayers,

(a) *Luke* xviii. 1.

they

they would have remained earthly out of that Worſhip, and out of their Prayers, they would have followed their own bruti ſh Nature, even like the Beaſts; and that becauſe of their inveterate Evil Habits which they had contracted for ſo long a time, while after *Adam*'s Sin, they did ſtill inſenſibly ſink more deeply into a Forgetfulneſs of God, becauſe by it they had loſt the ſupernatural Light: yea they had rendred themſelves groſs, earthly, and ſubject to their brutiſh Part, which at laſt they followed in all things, without thinking that they did Evil. Now the Lord pitying their Ignorance, gave them Laws about all things, that by theſe they might know that they did Evil, and that tho' they were created to love God only, yet they deſpiſing this moſt Excellent End of their Creation, placed their Affections on the Creatures, and took their Delight in Eating, Drinking Sleeping, and their Apparel. And beſides the Knowledge of this, God would help them to remember him in all their Employments and their daily Conduct, by the Statutes which he gave them to direct them how they ought to behave themſelves in all their Actions; And this out of the Fatherly Care he had for his ſtraying Children, that he might draw them back to himſelf by the Chains of his Commands, by which many have recovered the Love of God, which they had loſt: but they who deſpiſed the Obſervance of theſe Laws have miſerably periſhed. So that in Proceſs of time all Men have damn'd themſelves by their own Sins and the Fall of *Adam*.

§. 64. Then it was that Jeſus Chriſt ſet himſelf for the ſecond time to obtain the Mercy of God his Father for the Redemption of Men, when they had undone themſelves by their own Sins: which was a far more grievous Fault than that into which they had fallen by *Adam*'s Sin, becauſe the particular Will of every Man had done the Evil which before they committed only in the Will of *Adam*, without their own Concurrence. This engaged Jeſus Chriſt into more Pains and Labour for the Redemption of Men this ſecond time, than he had undergone formerly, when he had but one Will only to ſubdue and ſubject to the Will of God, that he might recover it to Grace; whereas afterwards ſo many hundred Millions of divers Wills did reſiſt the Divine Will, that they might follow their own Wills. Then as many particular Admonitions and Precepts were neceſſary as there were Men fallen into divers Sins; and as they had fallen from Grace by diverſe Kinds of Sins, while they placed their Affections on many different Objects, ſo they needed to have imparted to them as many diverſe Means for the Recovery of the ſame.

§. 65. Therefore it was not enough to say to Men then, as God said to *Adam*, after his Fall, (a) *Cursed is the Ground for thy Sake*, and *in the Sweat of thy Face shalt thou eat thy Bread*; and unto the Woman, *In Sorrow shalt thou bring forth Children*: for Men were now born amidst all those Curses, and understood nothing of a more happy State, than that which they possest after Sin, so that all those Curses and Admonitions were no longer capable to draw from Men the Tears of Repentance, or make them accomplish their Penance that they might be restored unto Favour; for they were all perswaded that the State of things ought necessarily to be as it then was, and therefore they labour'd as much as was possible for them to free themselves from this Curse, by suffering as little as they could, and taking in this their time of Penitence as much of Ease and Pleasures as might be: by which means they still went farther from the Love of God, by placing their Affections more and more upon the Creatures, being forgetful of their Creator.

§. 66. So that there remain'd no longer any other Remedy for the saving of so much as one Soul, but that which Jesus Christ made Choice of out of the Love he had for them, namely, that he should leave (in a certain Manner) the Bosom of his Father, where he reposed with Delight, that he might come into this mortal World, and converse with Men, who had undone themselves by their own Sins, that he might make them see them, abhor them, and amend them, and by this means might recover the Love of God which they had so carelessly lost.

§. 67. But if Jesus Christ had come then, to converse with Men, in his Glorious Body, they could not have seen him, for the Eyes of corrupt Flesh are not capable of seeing Spirits, nor even Glorious Bodies, which, tho' material, are of the same Nature with Spirits. Mortal Eyes cannot perceive them. Therefore Jesus Christ could not teach Men by his Glorious Body. He could easily have prevail'd with his Father to suggest into their Minds good Thoughts and pious Motions, yea even Divine and supernatural Light; but all this would not have availed to convert them, nor have made them sensible that they had highly offended God, and were in a State of Damnation: because of the inveterate Habits, by which every one of them followed the Motions of their brutish Nature. They stood in need of some mean that was visible and sensible to their Corruption, by which their

(a) *Gen* iii.

Hearts

Hearts might be touched, elſe they had all inſenſibly fallen into Eternal Ruine, becauſe they were all loſt without perceiving it by a damnable Imitation of one another, all of them thus running on in the broad Way of Hell. This made Jeſus Chriſt reſolve to become a mortal Man as they were, after he had obtained from his Father for the ſecond time, Mercy and Pardon for them, upon Condition of their Repentance and Amendment. He came therefore and cloathed himſelf with our Mortality, and became in all things like to corrupt Man, that he might recover him undergoing the Miſeries and Frailty that Sin had brought into humane Nature. For, except Sin, Jeſus Chriſt became in all things like to corruptible Man, taking upon himſelf all the Curſes and Pains due to their Sins, which he did undergo and ſuffer, as if he had been the moſt wicked of all Men, yea he even ſubjected himſelf to the Miſeries of Infancy, which Sin has cauſed, contracting his Glorious Body within the Bowels of a Virgin, to cover it with the corrupt Matter of the humane Nature, that from thence he might come forth unto Miſery, after the manner of other Men, who are born ſince the Fall. There are, Friendly Reader, ſome Captious Wits, who have asked me, how the Glorious Body of Jeſus Chriſt, who was a full and perfect Man, could be ſhut up into the Womb of a Virgin, which was far leſs than his Body: ſince in good Philoſophy great things cannot enter into leſſer things, and in Nature a Body muſt always be proportioned to the Greatneſs of that which is ſhut up within it? This is true indeed, as to groſs and natural Bodies, but not as to glorious Bodies; for they are not bounded nor ſubjected to any Corruption, but they rule over all inferiour things. As I told you formerly, that Man's Glorious Body, as God created it, was ſubtle, agile and luminous, penetrating the Earth, the Waters, the Air, the Sea, and all things, without any Reſiſtance: for all thoſe Creatures yeilded to the Beck of Man's Will, and opened themſelves, whereſoever he had a Mind to paſs, without any Fraction or Violence. Thus there is no Chriſtian but knows that the Body of Jeſus Chriſt after his Reſurrection, did enter ſeveral times where his Apoſtles were, when the Doors and Windows were ſhut. How then could he not enter into the Womb of the Virgin, to cloath himſelf with our Mortality, when ſuch was his Pleaſure? He could do it dear Reader; he will'd it, yea, he aſſuredly did it, that he might come and redeem us the ſecond time, after that Men had undone themſelves by their own Sins.

§. 68. He is therefore born of a Virgin after the ſame Manner that all other mortal Men are born, that they might not have Ground to ſay, that Jeſus Chriſt had given them Laws which could not be obſerved by frail Men as they were: for he ſubjected himſelf to the ſame Frailty and the ſame Weakneſſes and Miſeries to which all other Men are liable.

§. 69. But after that by Degrees he had encreas'd in Wiſdom and Stature, and began to manifeſt himſelf to Men; inſtead of hearkening to him and obeying him, they roſe up againſt him. They would not acknowledge him for their Saviour, but ſaid (f) *that he was a Seducer, that he was come to deſtroy the Law of God*: and inſtead of eſteeming and honouring him as their Saviour, who was come to deliver them from Damnation and from Eternal Death, they deſpiſe him, perſecute and revile him, and put him to Death, as if he had been a Malefactor. In the mean time, a very few did follow him in the Way of Salvation, whilſt the moſt part choſe rather to periſh in their Darkneſs, than to embrace the Light of Truth which he brought them. Therefore they were abandoned, and Jeſus Chriſt himſelf pronounced this Sentence againſt them, ſaying (g) *This is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men have loved Darkneſs, more than Light.*

§. 70. Who does not ſee that the ſame Sentence is pronounced alſo againſt the Chriſtians of this Age, who do wilfully reſiſt the Light of Truth, which God ſends them out of his great Mercy towards them? for they do more wilfully reſiſt the Divine Light than ever the *Jews* did, when Jeſus Chriſt took humane Fleſh, whereby he might bring them his Light of Truth. Is there not reaſon to fear, that the Chriſtians of this Age ſhall be forſaken of God, as the obſtinate *Jews* are; ſince they do yet more deſerve to be thus abandoned, having received by Jeſus Chriſt the Light of Truth, and ſuch particular Inſtructions, viſible and adapted even to their natural Senſes, that they cannot be ignorant of them, nor any ways doubt of the Truth of them; yea, they publickly profeſs themſelves to be Chriſtians, and by Word preach the Doctrine of the Goſpel? But whilſt they glory in this Law, by their Works they deſtroy it, and order all their Actions by Principles directly contrary to the Doctrine of the Goſpel, doing thoſe things which Chriſt has expreſly forbidden them, and leaving undone what he has commanded them: and thus they deſerve rather to be called

(f) *John* vii. 12. *Matt.* xxvii. (g) *Joh.* iii. 19.

Anti-

Antichriſtians, than Chriſtians.

§. 71. And yet they would perſwade themſelves that they are Chriſtians, becauſe they bear that Name, and were baptized, and hereby liſted to be the Soldiers of Jeſus Chriſt, and therefore they hope to be ſaved by his Merits: This Hope will fail them at Death, for Jeſus Chriſt has merited Salvation only for thoſe who will obſerve his Laws, and follow his Example; for he himſelf ſays in praying to his Father (*h*) *I pray not for the World, but for thoſe whom thou haſt given me out of the World. Thine they were, and thou haſt given them to me. Sanctifie them thro' thy Truth; Thy Word is Truth.* Now if Jeſus Chriſt did not pray for the World, how can it be ſaved? Since it is the general Belief of Chriſtians, that none can be ſaved but by Jeſus Chriſt? How then can thoſe Perſons who ſay it is impoſſible to keep the Goſpel-Law, hope for Salvation by the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, ſince he has merited nothing but for thoſe who believe in him, and Jeſus Chriſt has ſaid (*i*) *He that believeth in me ſhall do the Works that I do, yea, he ſhall do greater then theſe.* Do thoſe Ignorants imagine that they believe in Jeſus Chriſt, while they do all that he has forbidden, or when they will not follow or imitate him in any thing, but go on in a Way quite contrary to his Precepts, and deſpiſe that Saying of his; *Be ye Followers of me:* but they will needs follow the Impulſes of Fleſh and Blood, tho' according to the Scripture-Teſtimony (*k*) *Fleſh and Blood ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God?*

§. 72. Is it not to bely the Scripture, to ſay that they ſhall inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, tho' they follow the Deſires of the Fleſh with all their Might? Can Jeſus Chriſt lie, in ſaying to his Father, (*l*) *I pray not for the World?* Can ſuch look for Salvation by the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, tho' he would not even pray for the World, nor beg of his Father the Salvation of ſuch? Ought we not rather to believe that all thoſe who are of the World ſhall be rejected by God, for that they have not Jeſus Chriſt to be an Interceſſor for them with his Father, than to hope for Salvation by the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt upon a falſe Imagination that thoſe Merits ſhall be applyed to Worldlings, and ſuch as do not believe in Jeſus Chriſt but by ſome imaginary Speculations, or the falſe Opinions of others, who being deceived themſelves, do alſo deceive ignorant People, and ſuch as are ready to believe a Lie? For the Scripture ſaith expreſly, (*m*) *If you are the*

(h) *John* xvii. 9, 15, 16, 17. (i) *John* xiv. 12. (k) 1 *Cor.* xv. 50. (l) *John* xvii. 9. (m) *John* viii. 39.

Sons of Abraham, then do the Works of Abraham; which is as if it had been ſaid to us, If you are Chriſt's Children, then do ye Chriſt's Work. Which agrees with that Saying of Jeſus Chriſt. *He that believeth in me, doth the Works that I do.* To this alſo the Scripture has Reſpect when it ſaith (n); *By your Works ye ſhall be judged, and by your Works ye ſhall be condemned.*

§. 73. Verily, it were needful to have all the holy Scriptures raz'd and blotted out, in order to believe the frivolous Reaſonings which the Learned now have invented whereby to deſtroy Men, when they perſwade them that they ſhall be ſaved by the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, while they deſpiſe his Law, and live according to their corrupt Nature, tho' ſuch as live after this Manner, are not of God, but of the Devil, who is united to this Corruption: And ſince ſuch do not by the Union of their Wills belong to God, they ſhall not be given unto Jeſus Chriſt by his Father, ſeeing he ſaith (o) *Thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me*: and then he prays that he would *ſanctifie them through his Truth*, ſeeing he had given them to him; and ſays, *That he prayed not for the World, but for thoſe whom the Father had given him out of the World.* Now Sanctification does not conſiſt in Mens fancying in their Minds that Jeſus Chriſt has ſatisfied all for them; but in walking according to Righteouſneſs and Truth in the Spirit of Charity, and of Union with the Will of God, and in the other Works which Jeſus Chriſt did while he was upon Earth. This was one of his Leſſons (p) that it *behoveth us to fulfil all Righteouſneſs*, and yet Chriſtians now adays do fulfil all Fraud and Iniquity. He taught them (q) *Meekneſs and Lowlineſs of Heart*, while in the mean time Chriſtians now adays are puft up and ſwell with Pride as much as poſſible; and inſtead of denying themſelves, and taking up their Croſs to follow him, they rather follow and ſeek themſelves in every thing, they hate and avoid the Croſs and Sufferings, they deſpiſe the following and imitating of Jeſus Chriſt; and yet they ſay, they ſhall be ſanctified by Jeſus Chriſt. Who does not ſee that this is a Contempt which Men put upon the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt? for after he has obtained from God his Father, Grace to ſanctifie them by the Means which he has taught them; they deſpiſe this Grace, and they will needs have Jeſus Chriſt alone to ſuffer for the ſanctifying of all.

(n) *Job* xxxiv. 11. *Prov.* xxiv. 12. *Jer.* xxxii. 19. *Ezek.* vii. 27. (o) *John* xvii. 6, 9, 17. (p) *Matt.* iii. 15. (q) *Matt.* xi. 29.

§. 74

§. 74. Lo, theſe are ſome of the moſt abſurd Aſſertions taught by the Doctors of this Age, who will have Jeſus Chriſt to paſs for Mens hired Servant, to bear the Burthen of their Sins, while they walk at Eaſe, and take their Pleaſure and Contentment in this World, and withal ſay, that they do Honour to Jeſus Chriſt, by imputing to him the Merits of their Salvation, as if Jeſus Chriſt could be honoured by their calling him their Saviour: tho' he has no need of their Honour, nor of themſelves, he being perfect both Man and God, independent from all Things: But Men ought to honour Chriſt our Lord, and to praiſe him Day and Night, for that he has obtained for them of his Father Pardon, and the Grace to do Penitence, and this for the ſecond time, after that they had undone and damned themſelves by their own Sins. For if Jeſus Chriſt had not interceeded for his Brethren, after they had loſt the Grace of God by their own Sins, all Men had been abſolutely damned, as they formerly were undone in *Adam*. They may therefore call Jeſus Chriſt their *twofold*, yea, their *threefold Saviour*, but they ought not to neglect the Works of their Salvation ſo as to ſay, that *They have no need of any other Penitence, Righteouſneſs, or Sanctification, but that which was in Jeſus Chriſt himſelf*, and fraudulently to apply to themſelves, or claim as their own, his Merits, his Righteouſneſs, his Charity, and his Sanctification, while in the mean time, they remain in their Sins, and become ſtill more and more his Enemies. This is juſt as if Men believed that God had great need of them, and that he had redeemed them with the Price of his Son's Blood, that he might make them to rule and lord it in this World: As if, indeed, God's Honour depended upon Men; whereas on the contrary, all the Honour and Happineſs of Men do entirely depend upon God; for God poſſeſſeth in himſelf as much Glory and Honour, tho' all Men ſhould periſh, as if they were all ſaved. It is they themſelves, who receive Honour by their Salvation, but not God or Jeſus Chriſt, who being united inſeparably unto his Father, doth poſſeſs all Honour in himſelf, and has no need of the Honour which Men think they do him by aſcribing to him the Merit of their Salvation; for it is only Men themſelves who reap the Honour and Profit of their Salvation.

§. 75. And therefore Jeſus Chriſt has no need of the Honour which Men imagine they give him by aſcribing to him the Merits of their Salvation: It is his Will that they fulfil his Laws, and the Penitence enjoyn'd all Men in *Adam*, for their own Happineſs, which they are free to neglect if they will, tho' Jeſus Chriſt out of the Love he has for them deſires that they would work out their own Salvation, §. 76.

§. 76. And to encourage them to do this cheerfully, he cloathed himself with the Sackcloth of our Mortality, (r) *To give them an Example*, as he says in the Gospel: and not that he might save them as it were by a kind of Enchantment, by making his Merits pass into Criminal Souls who wilfully continue in their Sins. Truly these are not they whom his Father has given him, and for whom he prays that they may be sanctified in Truth; for this Sanctification is necessary for all that will be saved. Now it appears sufficiently by the Life and Actions of those Nominal Christians, that they are not sanctified, since they live still according to the Motions of their corrupt Nature, and not at all according to the Regeneration in the Spirit of Jesus Christ; while yet in the mean time, they foolishly imagine that the Merits of Jesus Christ shall be applied to them, by the Perswasion of their blind Guides, who make them believe a Lie, and hope for Salvation without being sanctified in Truth, and without believing in the Word of Truth.

§. 77. And therefore with great Reason the Scripture says, *Your Guides are Deceivers*; for truly the People are many Ways seduc'd by them: for it is generally affirmed by them, *That God hath elected some Persons to Salvation, and appointed others to Damnation*; which is false, and a Misrepresentation, tho' they pretend to found this Error upon some Passages of the Holy Scripture, especially where it is said that God chose *Jacob* and rejected *Esau*.

§. 78. But those blind Men do not understand the Meaning of the Scritpures, and take this Figure according to the Letter, explaining it according to their weak Corruptions, without discovering its true Sense. For *Jacob* and *Esau* are the Figure or Type of the Man who is sanctified, and of him who lives according to corrupt Nature. Lo, this is the *Esau* and the *Jacob* whom the Scripture points at by the Twins that came forth out of the same Womb. For all Men who are born since *Adam*'s Fall, bring along with them the good Spirit of *Jacob*, and the evil one of *Esau*; that is to say, the Good that God created in them, and the Evil that Sin has brought into them. Those two Spirits are in the Bodies of all Men that come into the World; but it is the Part of the Mother, Reason, to use all its Endeavours to procure the first Place to the good Spirit of *Jacob*, and to resist and reject the evil Spirit of *Esau*, that is, the Reason and Free-Will of Man (as being the Mother that must govern those two Spirits, to wit, the

(r) *John* xiii. 15.

Spirit

Spirit which God created in Man, and the Spirit that Sin has brought into him) this Free-will, I ſay, muſt make choice of the one or the other of theſe two Spirits which it feels living within it. And if it is wiſe, it will ſtill give the Preference to the good Spirit, the Work of God, and deſpiſe the Spirit of corrupt Nature, which is the Work of Sin. And tho' this Spirit will needs come forth firſt, as *Eſau* did, yet he is not the firſt; for God gave unto Man the good Spirit before that Sin had brought into him the evil Spirit; even as *Jacob* was truly conceived in the Womb of his Mother before *Eſau*, which made that he came forth laſt, becauſe the ſecond hindred his coming forth. In like manner the faithful Soul muſt ſtill give the preference to the good Spirit of God, tho' the Spirit of Nature doth always break forth firſt by its ſenſual Deſires and Appetites; whom we ought to beguile, as the prudent Mother beguiled *Eſau*, and ſend him far away from us, that in the mean time the good Spirit may receive the Bleſſing from God, and the Birthright: for he truly did proceed firſt from the Eternal Father, and therefore ought always to be preferr'd to this natural Spirit, tho' this will live in us ſo long as we abide in this Valley of Tears; we ſhall ſtill carry this corrupt evil Spirit about with us: But we muſt never let it govern our Life and Actions. This Prerogative muſt be given to the good Spirit of God, who is eldeſt, tho' both have come forth of the ſame Womb. All this is moſt true, both as to the Nature of thoſe two Children, and of theſe two Spirits. But Mens carnal Minds do not underſtand aright, even natural things, how then ſhould they underſtand the true Meaning of the Scriptures? They invent Gloſſes and Interpretations as their Imagination ſuggeſts them, and with theſe Explanations they deceive the People, and make them embrace Lies for Truths, even in Matters which reſpect Eternal Salvation: And the People are often pleaſed with thoſe Lies, and are not deſirous to diſcover the Truth.

§. 79. Therefore God ſheweth unto me, *That Men now a-days have forſaken him, and have ſtrayed farther from the Truth, than they did at the time that Jeſus Chriſt took human Fleſh for their Redemption; and that Jeſus Chriſt, out of the great Love he has for them, comes now for the third time to renew his Goſpel-Spirit upon Earth, having obtained of his Father Pardon and Mercy for repenting Sinners, as alſo Grace to enable them to fulfil the Goſpel-Law for all thoſe who are willing to embrace and obſerve it.* And this is the laſt Mercy that God will grant unto Men thro' the Merits of *Jeſus Chriſt*, but not after the

way

way that deceitful Men do repreſent it, that tho' Men live according to corrupt Nature, they ſhall be ſaved by the Merits of *Jeſus Chriſt*; which is falſe: For none ſhall be ſaved but they who live a new Life in the Spirit of Jeſus, and deſpiſe this evil Spirit of corrupt Nature.

§. 80. And we muſt not imagine that God will grant this Grace to *Peter*, and not to *Paul*, as ignorant People ſay, *That God hath elected ſome, and rejected others*: For this would contradict the fulfilling of all Righteouſneſs which *Jeſus Chriſt* is come to teach: But certainly God did elect all Men to Salvation, and none to Perdition; and he did alſo equally pardon all Men in *Adam* without excepting any, and did equally appoint for all of them the ſame Grace and Penitence; ſo that no body can ſay in truth, that he in particular is elected or rejected of God: But he may well ſay indeed, That if he is damned, it is his own Choice, and of his own Will (*s*), for *God wills not the Death of a Sinner, but that he be converted and live.* And therefore we ought never to imagine, that God will damn ſo much as one Soul; for he cannot do any evil, and Damnation is the greateſt of all Evils: But Men, not underſtanding the Senſe of the Holy Scripture, do wreſt and miſinterpret it into a falſe Meaning, and they do thereby utter Calumnies and Blaſphemies againſt God, and thro' their Ignorance and want of Light, they accuſe him of Injuſtice and Lying; and thereafter when they have accuſed God, they go about again to excuſe him, as if truly they were capable by their Words to juſtifie the Works of God. Silly Worm of the Earth! that ought to proſtrate its Face upon the Ground, or cover it, as the Angel covered his Face with his Wings, before the Works of God! And yet ſuch are bold to find fault with him, condemn him, and conclude that he may do what he will; when their ſhallow Brains cannot comprehend what they read in the Scriptures, and when they obſerve that he does things which they would judge to be unjuſt; tho' this is impoſſible; for God can never act unjuſtly, ſince he is in all things Good, and Juſt, and True. But Men having in themſelves a wicked, unjuſt and lying Spirit, cannot comprehend the Goodneſs of God, nor his other inſeparable Perfections; and they conceiving the Scripture-Terms according to their Apprehenſions, do imagine that God is angry, that he hardned *Pharaoh*'s Heart, or allowed an Injuſtice to be done to *Eſau*, and a thouſand ſuch other things in the Scripture, tho' in the mean time all is perfectly juſt, good and true.

(*s*) *Ezek.* xxxiii. 11.

§. 81. For

§. 81. For God never preferr'd any Men, but thoſe who of their Free-will yielded up themſelves unto him, and were diſpoſed to fulfil his holy Will by denying their own. All in this Diſpoſition are they who belong to God, and whom he has given to his Son *Jeſus Chriſt*, and no others. And theſe are they for whom *Jeſus Chriſt* prays.

§. 82. Therefore all Men who are now living in the World, ought to chuſe whether they will be of the World, or of the Number of thoſe whom God the Father has given out of the World to his beloved Son. For we muſt not imagine that theſe things reſpect only the time when Jeſus Chriſt took human Fleſh in this mortal World, ſince the holy Scripture continues ſtill to ſpeak. And when God ſays, *Thoſe who are mine*, we are to underſtand all thoſe who ſhall be his unto the End of the World. All thoſe ſhall be given to *Jeſus Chriſt* to be his Diſciples, and not they who are of the World. We muſt not then imagine, that they who are given by the Father unto *Jeſus Chriſt*, were his Apoſtles only, or the Diſciples who followed them; but all thoſe are given to *Jeſus Chriſt* who ſhall obey his Goſpel-Law, and follow his Example even unto the End of the World. Lo, this is the true Senſe of that Paſſage which overturns the abſurd Interpretation of the modern Divines, who blaſphemouſly ſay, That God has choſen one to Salvation, and another to Damnation; for God does, and will always do that which is good. And however Men may change or do evil, yet God will never change: He elects, and will always elect unto Salvation thoſe who ſhall abide in his Love, obſerving carefully the End for which they were created; and he has rejected, and will always reject thoſe who ſhall abide in Self-love, or the Love of any of the Creatures. And it is a Folly to imagine that God will prefer one particular People or Party in Religion, ſeeing all Men in general are created by him, and he will never caſt off any of his Children, if out of the Free-will which he has given them, they will yield up themſelves unto him, and voluntarily ſubmit this their Free-will to be govern'd by him, and will be entirely ſubject in all things to his Will as his Creatures.

§. 83. Theſe are the Elect and the Predeſtinated of God, but not (as ignorant People ſay) That they are Elect, for that they belong to the Reformation of *Calvin*, or of *Luther*, of *Menno*, of the *Arminians*, *Romaniſts*, *Quakers*, or of any other Secr or Religion whatſoever. For the Scripture teſtifies, (t) That *with God there is no Reſpect of Perſons*, but he

(t) *Rom.* ii. 11.

is juſt and true, and renders to every one according to his Works; for it is ſaid, (u) *By your Works ye ſhall be judged, and by your Works ye ſhall be condemned*, and not by the Name of the Religion that ye profeſs, or by the Truth and Opinion that ye entertain, while you preſume that you are ſanctified becauſe you bear the Name of ſome holy Religion; for all thoſe Names are falſe and hypocritical.

§. 84. Thus one ſays, I am *Catholick*, in which he lies; for to be Catholick implies no other thing, but to be in the Communion of Saints. But it appears by their Works, that they who call themſelves Catholicks, are not ſatisfied in Truth, as Jeſus Chriſt prays that his may be. They who are called *Lutherans* are not Evangelical; they who give themſelves that Name, we ſee they lead a Life directly contrary to an Evangelical Life; yea, they ſay, *It is impoſſible for them to keep the Commandments of God, far leſs the Evangelical or Goſpel-Law*; by which they acknowledge that they are Evangelical in Name only, and not in Deed. Thoſe alſo of *Calvin's Reformation* do falſly boaſt, that they are God's Elect; for this Election doth not appear by Sanctification, from which this Religion is very diſtant; for they who are addicted to it, do generally live according to the Motions of their corrupt Nature; and God has ſaid, (x) *That Fleſh and Blood ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* And the Mennoniſts or Anabaptiſts ſay, That they are regenerate in the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, tho' in effect they live ſtill according the Impulſes of Fleſh and Blood, chuſing for themſelves, as to Meat and Apparel, the fineſt and the beſt, affecting only an hypocritical Simplicity in the Faſhion of their Cloaths, and their way of ſpeaking; but in other things they are as delicate and curious in all that they make uſe of, as thoſe of any other Sect or Religion. The *Arminians* are ſomewhat more impartial, but altogether void of the Humility of Jeſus Chriſt, whilſt they believe that they can do good of themſelves, and be ſaved when they pleaſe; as if Salvation depended upon themſelves, without the Grace which Jeſus Chriſt has obtain'd for them of God his Father. The *Quakers* would perſwade every body that they are enlightned by the Holy Spirit, tho' in all things they follow the Motions of their corrupt Nature, and do only vainly fancy that they are led by the Holy Spirit.

(u) *Matth.* xvi, *and* 27. *Rom.* ii. 6. 2 *Cor.* v. 10. *Rev.* xxii. 12. (x) 1 *Cor.* xv, *and* 50.

§. 85. Thus

§. 85. Thus then all thoſe Sects take up with a Lie; and bear Names which are falſe before God, whilſt all of them, without Diſtinction, do live ſtill according to the Corruption of their old Father *Adam*; for there is not ſo much as one of theſe Religions that has taken up the Practice of the Evangelical Spirit, without which none can be ſaved. For whatſoever kind of Reformation, or whatſoever Names of Sanctification they may bear, all this will avail them nothing before God, if they do not in Truth and Practice embrace the Law of the Goſpel, which is the only ſaving Law and Religion. This may be eaſily conceived, if one will apply himſelf truly to conſider why Jeſus Chriſt became a mortal Man, as we are. He muſt then abſolutely conclude, *That all Chriſtians, of whatſoever Reformation or Religion they may be, are fallen from God, and by a falſe Title bear the Name of Chriſtians*; ſince none of them do really put in practice an Evangelical Life, but only follow the Doctrines of ſome Men, who would be eſteem'd virtuous, tho' they live according to their corrupt Nature.

§. 86. They have found out Inventions whereby to amuſe Mens Minds by pious Precepts, and ſpecious Words cunningly contriv'd, and pretend to Holineſs and the Reformation of Chriſtendom; and that they have diſcovered the Abuſes of others, and would have them amended. In this many pious Perſons followed them, thinking they did well in it, tho' they became much worſe after their Reformations than they were before, by giving looſer Reins to their corrupted Nature, and following its Impulſes, in Contempt of the Doctrine which Jeſus Chriſt had given them: Thus ſhaking off the wholſome Yoke of Obedience, which our Lord had ſo much recommended to them, when he ſaid, (y) *I came not to do my own Will, but the Will of him that ſent me.*

§. 87. Thoſe ſenſual Perſons were well pleaſed to meet with ſuch Reformers, who taught every one to follow their own Will, and to deſpiſe thoſe who were ſubject to the *Roman* Church, which retains yet many Inſtructions repugnant to corrupt Nature; for ſhe appoints Faſts and Abſtinences, the obſerving of ſome Rules, the Celebration of Feſtivals, and the particular Confeſſion of Sins, which corrupt Nature reſiſts, being unwilling to bear the Shame and Confuſion of its evil Deeds, and deſerving rather to excuſe than confeſs them. But thoſe Reformers have found out a Remedy for all theſe, by allowing Chriſtians a Libertine Life, binding them to no Laws, Rules or Obſervances, but ſuch as their brutal Na-

(y) *John* vi. 38.

ture

ture enclines them to. And with this they perſwade themſelves that they do better, and that they have diſcover'd the Faults of others, tho' this can avail them nothing, nor ſerve to advance the Perfection of their Souls. For tho' it were true, that all the Abuſes which they imagined, had really been in the Church of *Rome*, yet thoſe Reformers would not have corrected them, becauſe they did not labour to re-eſtabliſh the Evangelical Doctrine which was firſt taught by Jeſus Chriſt.

§. 88. For to make a true Reformation, all things ought to be entirely re-eſtabliſhed, as Jeſus Chriſt did at firſt conſtitute the ſame, in ſaying to the Apoſtle, (z) *Thou art* Peter, *and upon this Rock will I build my Church, and the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it*: And tho' this little Ship ſhall be toſs'd, yet it ſhall never ſink or periſh. This Church then muſt always remain, even to the end of the World, as Jeſus promiſed to his Diſciples, (a) *That he would be with them, even to the end of the World.* By which he meant no other thing, but that his Goſpel ſhould remain even to the End of the World; and tho' many ſhould oppoſe it, yet its Enemies ſhall never overturn it; it ſhall always continue in its Integrity, for thoſe who are willing to obey and follow it. But the Wicked who would needs ſhake off this Yoke of the Evangelical Law, that they might indulge and follow their corrupt Nature, have drawn Arguments, even out off this very Law, to favour their Looſeneſs, and by their Gloſſes and ſubtile Arguments have invented ſo many Diſtinctions about this Evangelical Doctrine to pervert its true Meaning, and by this means to confound the Minds of the Ignorant, who not being able to diſcern the Truth, have embrac'd Errour and Lies, when covered with Pretences to Purity and Sanctity. Since many Sorts of Sects and Religions have ariſen in the Church of God, which have ſtill become more and more ſo depraved, that now it can ſcarce be known where the *Truth* may be found, ſeeing each of thoſe Sects pretend to have it, tho' all of them in general, and each of them in particular, have departed from the true Senſe of the Evangelical Doctrine, and adhere only to the vain Gloſſes which each of them have drawn from it after their own Mode, and according as they had determined to live in Softneſs and Eaſe. So that the true Doctrine of the Goſpel is no longer any where obſerved, tho' every one would have the Name of doing it, and of being a Chriſtian; eſpecially they who think they are reformed,

(z) *Matth.* xvi. 18. (a) *Matth.* xxviii. 20.

tho'

though they are only Institutors of new Religions, and not Reformers of the true Church or Christians: for they do not follow the Practice of the Primitive Church, which ought never to be altered, seeing Jesus Christ has said, that it shall continue even to the end of the World. But sensual and vain-glorious Men made People believe that they would reform the Abuses of the *Roman* Church, while they instituted new Sects under their own Names, and so make the Name of Jesus Christ to be forgotten, the only Founder of the true Church; for no other can be holy or blessed. And they who call themselves Christians, may blush and be asham'd to change that Name, and take up with the Name of a *Luther*, or *Calvin*, or *Menno*; or of any other Leaders of Sects, who have sown Tares in the Field of the Church of God, while Men Slept in their Remisness and Degeneracy.

§. 89. They have reproach'd me bitterly, for having somewhere expresst my Fear, that those Reformers of Religions may have gone to Hell, tho' there be but too much ground for such an Apprehension; for the Scripture says, that *the tree is known by its fruit*; and we see and find by Experience, That all those supposed Reformations have brought forth little in the Church of God, but Enmity and Hatred against their Neighbour, and a certain perswasion of obtaining Salvation without good Works, which the Scripture condemns as a Sin against the Holy Ghost, (a) which shall *not be forgiven, neither in this World, nor in that which is to come.* And yet those Reformers boast, as if they did better than others, and had discovered the Abuses of the *Romish* Church. And indeed this would have been a happy discovery for them, if they had reformed in themselves the Abuses which they observed in others. But they were of the number of those Hypocrites, of whom the Scripture speaks, saying, (b) *Thou Hypocrite, why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? First cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.* But these supposed Reformers do quite contrary to this wholsome Counsel, while they would root out the abuses of the Church of *Rome*, and yet they themselves are fal'n and degenerated so far, that their Errors are Beams if compared with these Abuses. Tho' I am not ignorant that there were, and still are, great Corruptions in that Church.

(a) *Matth.* xii. 32. (b) *Matth.* vii. 5.

§. 90. But since I was acquainted with most of the Reformed Churches and Sects, I find that at the bottom, and as to the essence of Religion, they have grots Errors and Defects, as well as the *Romish* Church. Nay they are more estranged from the practice of the Evangelical Law than those of the *Roman* Church, where Men do yet count it their Duty to subdue their own Wills, and to deny themselves; and where so many Persons make solemn Vows of continual Poverty, perpetual Chastity, and entire Obedience. And though all do not perfectly observe these things, yet there are some who do religiously keep them. Whereas we do not find any among those Reformed, who for the Love of God observe such things; because they have been taught by their Leaders that they can neither keep the Commandments of God, nor Live an Evangelical Life.

§. 91. They will not endeavour to do impossible things, having once embrac'd this false Belief of an Impossibility; which is wholly imaginary, as appears by what Jesus Christ said to his Apostle, who when he heard him say, (c) that *it was harder for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven; than for a Camel to go through the eye of a needle*; the Apostle wondering at this, Jesus said unto him, *This is impossible as to man, but not as to God*: By which he would have him to understand that Man, according to his corrupt Nature, was not able to observe the Gospel-Law; because the Law of corrupt Nature is wholly repugnant to the Gospel-Law, which is supernatural, and inconsistent with the carnal Spirit, and fights against all the sensual Inclinations of this corrupt Nature: So that had not Man received Grace from God thro' Jesus Christ to do Penitence, he could not have undergone any other but an inraged kind of Penance, as the Devils do to all Eternity; because Man since Sin is truly unable to do any Good, and is led and bent to do all manner of Evil.

§. 92. And he had continued in this wretched State, if Jesus Christ at the instant in which he sinn'd, had not interceded with his Father for Grace and Pardon for Man, which he obtain'd the first time for all Men in *Adam*; and for the second time he obtain'd Grace and Pardon for all Men, who had destroy'd themselves by their own Sins. As he has now obtain'd for the third time the same Graces, for all those who will embrace the Gospel-Law, and observe it as much as is possible for them, without Glossing it away, as all those Reformers have done, who affirm falsely, that Jesus Christ has satisfied all for

(c) *Luke* xviii. 25, *and* 27.

them;

hem, ſo that they are not oblig'd to do any thing for themelves; ſince Chriſt never ſatisfied for any but for thoſe who ſhall embrace the Penitence enjoyned for their Sins. And when Jeſus Chriſt ſaved Men from the Damnation into which *Adam* had cast them, he obtain'd of his Father Pardon for the Sins which *Adam* had committed in them, upon condition that they ſhould do Penance, and that in the ſweat of their Face they ſhould eat their Bread, and undergo the other Miſeries appointed unto Man for his Sin. So that they who will not embrace thoſe Penitences enjoyn'd by God, cannot enjoy the Grace and Pardon that Chriſt has obtain'd of his Father for them: becauſe Penitence was a neceſſary Condition annex'd to this Pardon, and he who does not fulfil the Conditions, loſes his Claim. Thoſe therefore who do not accompliſh this Penitence to which Pardon and Grace are annexed, cannot enjoy this Grace nor Pardon, and ought not to believe that Chriſt has ſatisfied for them. And therefore they ought not to hope for Salvation by his Merits, as thoſe Seducers make them believe, for Jeſus Chriſt has obtain'd no other thing for Mankind from his Father, but *the Pardon of their paſt Sins, and Grace to do Penitence, and to amend them for the time to come.*

§. 93. This is the way by which Chriſt has ſaved and will ſave Mankind; and not in that Sophiſtical manner which thoſe Reformers teach their People, while they make them believe that He has ſatisfied all for them, even though they continue in their Sins, yea and die in them, which is a damnable Doctrine. For if *Jeſus Chriſt* had given all Satisfaction to his Father for Men, as they would perſwade themſelves, theſe could not have ſinn'd after this Pardon and Grace; they would have been confirmed in it as the Angels are, who are out of Danger of falling; for all the Works of God are compleat and perfect. There would have been no need of Chriſt's coming the ſecond and third time to Redeem us, if the Pardon and Grace had been abſolute. There would have been no ground to fear Damnation, if Salvation had been abſolutely obtain'd by Jeſus Chriſt; they could not fail of Salvation; and there would have been no neceſſity of Chriſt's coming to die for us, nor of giving us his Laws, or leaving us his Goſpel in Writing, after he had ſatisfied all by his Death. For what end did he eſtabliſh his Church? Why did he appoint the Apoſtles to Preach? Why did they lay down their Lives as Martyrs, ſince Jeſus Chriſt had ſatisfied all for Chriſtians by his Paſſion, without their being oblig'd to do any thing? The Apoſtle needed not to exhort Chriſtians, to *work out their ſalvation with fear and trembling*, and that even after the Death of Jeſus

Chriſt; for there was not any thing more to be fear'd, or done, if Jeſus Chriſt had done all for Men. They needed only to paſs their time here in Eaſe and Pleaſure, truſting to the Satisfaction of Jeſus Chriſt, as indeed they do now, having once drunk in thoſe Errors and Lies; by which they imagine that they do great Honour to Jeſus Chriſt in aſcribing to him the Merits of their Salvation, and in being willing that he ſuffer all the puniſhment of their Sins, and bear their Reproaches, Shame and Confuſion; whilſt in the mean time they may enjoy in this Life their worldly Eaſe and Pleaſures.

§. 94. I appeal to you, dear Reader, if it would not be a barbarous Ingratitude, for a highly guilty Criminal to deſire that his Friend or Brother ſhould ſuffer for him the Impriſonment and Death which his Sins had merited? And if ſuch a Wretch could with a ſober Mind ſay or believe, that he did honour to his Brother or his Friend by letting him (tho' Innocent) ſuffer Death for him who was highly Criminal; Do you not think that the guilty Perſon, if generous, would not let his innocent Brother ſuffer for him? and that he would even be aſham'd if his Brother ſhould propoſe ſuch a thing unto him? he muſt needs have a wicked Conſcience, and a cowardly Heart, if he ſhould accept or permit his Friend or Brother to endure the Shame, Pains and Death which he himſelf had merited by his Villanies; How much rather ought the Criminal Chriſtian to be aſham'd, who will have Jeſus Chriſt to endure Torments and Death to ſatisfie for the many Crimes of which he knows himſelf to be guilty, and with this fancies that he does honour to Jeſus Chriſt, by aſcribing to him his deliverance? Has Jeſus Chriſt need of thoſe wicked Sinners, that he ſhould think it an honour to ſuffer Death for them, that he may let them go on in their Sins? Theſe Sentiments are ſo abſur'd, that it is a wonder how any Man of common natural Judgment cou'd entertain them, ſeeing they are ſo repugnant to Reaſon, Equity, Truth, and all Civility and Diſcretion. The Minds of thoſe who have embrac'd ſuch a Doctrine, muſt have been ſtrangely bewitched, and the Devil muſt have confounded their Underſtanding to make them believe a Lie, and neglect the means of their Salvation, that he might draw them into Perdition with himſelf.

§. 95. I pray God to open the Eyes of all thoſe who ſhall read the Truths contain'd in this Treatiſe of THE RENOVATION OF THE GOSPEL-SPIRIT, whereby they may perceive their Errors and deteſt them; and may ſee the ſolid Truths which God teaches me, and the Means to follow them by imitating Jeſus Chriſt, who for

this

this end cloath'd himſelf with our Mortality, that he might ſhew us in a particular manner all that we ought to do and avoid, that we may return to THE LOVE OF GOD which we loſt in *Adam*, and thereafter by our own Sins. And ſeeing Men had by degrees fallen from this DIVINE LOVE for which only they were created, Jeſus Chriſt came to Redeem them from Damnation for the ſecond time, when he cloathed himſelf with their Mortality. Not that he came into this mortal World to ſuffer and die, that he might deliver Criminals after the manner that thoſe Gloſſers would have it to be underſtood, namely, that he has paid by his Sufferings for all their paſt Sins, and for thoſe alſo that they ſhall commit in time to come: but he came to teach them the Means by which they might recover God's Favour, having obtain'd of his Father for Men, Pardon for the Sins they had committed till then thro' Ignorance, and Grace to embrace his Evangelical Law.

§. 96. So that no Body has ground to ſay in Truth, that it is impoſſible for him to keep the Commands of God, or the Evangelical Law, ſince Jeſus Chriſt has obtain'd Grace for us to obſerve both, if we ſhall make uſe of the means which he hath enjoyn'd us, and not otherwiſe: For if a Man will not make uſe of the Graces which Jeſus Chriſt has purchaſed for us, he abides in the brutal State of corrupt Nature, incapable of doing any good, more than the Beaſts, who having no Divine Soul, regard only earthly things. Such a one doth truly reſemble them, while in this World he ſeeks only for the fineſt things, the beſt, the moſt delightful, convenient, and the moſt pleaſing to his brutal Senſes; and deſpiſes the Lowlineſs and Sufferings of Jeſus Chriſt, with all the other Means which he has taught us by the Evangelical Law, which is the only way that leads to Salvation, and without which none can ever attain it; ſeeing all Men, by doing the quite contrary, have fallen from the LOVE OF GOD, which is indiſpenſably neceſſary to Salvation.

§. 97. This the Apoſtle aſſures us of, ſaying, (d) *Though I have the Gift of Propheſie, and underſtand all Myſteries and all Knowledge; and though I have all Faith, ſo that I could remove Mountains; and though I beſtow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and give my Body to be burned, it profiteth nothing, if I have not Charity*, which is THE LOVE OF GOD: For the Love of God is the Eſſence of all Good, and all Laws and good Works are the true means of recovering *this Love*,

(d) 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

in which all Men were created. Hence it is that none of them ſhall be ſaved, if they die without this LOVE. How could they be ſaved, as thoſe Interpreters ſay, by dying in their Self-Love, and in ſo many kinds of Sins? while in the mean time they comfort them at Death, by telling them *that they ſhall be ſaved by the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt*, by which they deceive them; for the Merits of Chriſt will be applied to true Chriſtians only, and to thoſe who ſhall obey his Evangelical Law, which is the laſt Mercy that God will diſpenſe to Men through the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt. Nay, he did not grant them this ſecond Mercy, but upon condition of obeying this Law; which Condition is annexed to the Pardon of their particular Sins, even as Penitence was to the Pardon of *Adam*'s Sin. So that he who will not yield to obſerve the Evangelical Law, cannot enjoy the Graces which God hath granted to Men for the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt; for this Law is now neceſſary to Salvation, becauſe of the frailty of Men, who have inſenſibly fallen from the LOVE OF GOD, by cleaving to ſo many different Objects of the tranſitory Things of this World. For one has ſet all his Affections on Gold and Silver, another on Worldly Honour, others on Carnal Pleaſures, others on the Pleaſures of Taſte and Bodily Accommodations: ſo that 'tis impoſſible for them to love God, whilſt their Affections are divided amongſt ſo many different Objects. And if none can be ſaved without this LOVE OF GOD, we muſt conſequently conclude, that when *Chriſt* cloath'd himſelf with our Mortality, all Men had undone and damn'd themſelves by their own Sins; and that there was then no other Remedy left for their Salvation, but to point out to them, in a viſible manner, all thoſe things in particular, which had withdrawn them from the LOVE OF GOD, that they who were deſirous to recover this Love, might find the means of doing it.

§. 98. All this *Jeſus Chriſt* came to teach them, after he had put on a frail Nature, ſuch as ours is, that he might enjoin Men nothing but what their Frailty could bear, as he found by his own Experience. And indeed he taught them nothing by the Evangelical Law which they may not very eaſily perform when they are abſolutely reſolved to become true Chriſtians. They may follow Jeſus Chriſt Step by Step, if they will, ſince he obtain'd for them of God his Father the Grace to do it, before he came down into this Valley of Tears.

§. 99. But while Men are reſolv'd to gratifie and follow their Corruption, they ſay truly, *that it is impoſſible for them*

to

to observe the Gospel-Law; for they despise the Grace of God, which *Christ* has purchased for them, and God will force none: for having created all Men free, he lets them act according to their Liberty; he sent his well-beloved Son to give them an Example, and saith unto them (*e*), *Be ye faithful in a few things, and I will set you over great things.* But those who will not profit by this Grace, nor obey these Instructions, God gives them up to the Spirit of Error, which they chuse to follow, rather than the Spirit of Truth, which *Christ* came to communicate unto them. Hence it is that these Persons are condemned in the Scripture, which plainly saith, (*f*) *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men have loved darkness rather than light.*

§. 100. And this is a most just Sentence, since Men will wilfully abide in their Error, and follow the Corruption of their Flesh, into which they are fallen through *Adam*'s Sin, while at the same time they are free to be quickned into the Spirit of Jesus Christ, by the Divine Light which he brought them when he came into this lower World. They who receive and obey it are saved; and they who despise it do eternally Perish through their own Fault; for on God's Part nothing has been wanting to them.

§. 101. For *Christ* has shewed them by his Doctrine and Example, what they ought to do, and what to avoid, that they may recover the LOVE OF GOD which they have lost; some by placing all their Affections on this World's Wealth and Riches; and these Jesus Christ teaches *Poverty of Spirit*; and he himself put it in Practice before them, to the end that withdrawing their Affections from earthly Riches, they might place them on God their great Creator. And as to those who had set their Hearts on worldly Honour, Jesus Christ teaches them *humility and lowliness of heart*; which he himself also practis'd in his own Life and Actions. And as to them who had set their Hearts upon carnal Pleasures, our Lord teaches *Continence*; saying, (*g*) *Blessed are the pure in heart*: and he himself practis'd *Chastity*, and promis'd to Virgins that they shall follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. Again as to those who take Pleasure in Eating and Drinking, Jesus Christ prescribes *Abstinence*; and he himself fasted forty Days in the Wilderness: and his Apostle says, (*h*) *My brethren, be sober*, &c. And to those who lov'd and desir'd all Accommodations and Ease for the Body, Jesus Christ

(*e*) *Matth.* xxv. 21. *Rev.* ii. 10. (*f*) *Joh.* iii. 19. (*g*) *Matth.* v. 8. (*h*) 1 *Pet.* 4. 7.

recommends (i), *to deny themſelves, and take up their Croſs and follow him* in Hardſhips, in Sufferings and Straits, wherein he walked all the time he was upon this corrupt Earth, where he never ſought any Eaſe or Pleaſure.

§. 102. All theſe things, with many others, Jeſus Chriſt came to teach Men, that he might ſhew them the way by which they might recover the Love of God which they had loſt thro' Ignorance; or for that they thought that it was lawful for them to enjoy all thoſe things which were delightful to their Senſes, without offending God, ſince he had created them for Man. This indeed would have been true if Man had remained faithful in the LOVE of his God; he might then have enjoy'd with Delight all that's good and beautiful in Nature; but the Frailty and Weakneſs which he has now contracted by Sin, diſcharges him to do ſo any more; ſince he cannot love all thoſe things, nor any one of them, without withdrawing his Love from his God, in proportion as he is carried out after the Love of the Creatures. He muſt therefore abſolutely ceaſe to love theſe, if he would return to the Love of his God. This *Chriſt* came to teach us both by Word and Deed. Not that God ſtands in need of our Poverty, Humility, Abſtinence, or other Virtues; for He is in himſelf altogether Rich, Good, and Perfect, without the Intervention of Men: but it is very neceſſary for them to uſe thoſe means for recovering of the LOVE OF GOD, without which there is no Salvation.

§. 103. Therefore Jeſus Chriſt came at the laſt Hour to redeem Men the ſecond time, when he was born in this mortal State, to give Men an Offer of the Means of their Salvation; but not to redeem them after the manner that thoſe Expoſitors teach, as if Chriſt had paid and ſatisfied all for Men, and there were no need of their doing any thing themſelves. Which contradicts all the Old and New Teſtament, where God has ſo often ſaid by his Prophets, (k) *If thou ſhalt keep my commandments, and do this or that; I will give thee ſuch or ſuch Bleſſings: but if thou doſt not what I command thee, ſuch and ſuch Curſes ſhall overtake thee.* And is it not written in the New Teſtament as I have elſewhere ſaid, (†) *By thy works thou ſhalt be judged, and by thy works thou ſhalt be condemned?* And does not Jeſus Chriſt ſay, (l) *He that will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs and follow me?* And elſewhere Jeſus Chriſt ſays, (m) that *he did all his*

(i) *Luke* ix. *and* 23. (k) *Deut.* xxviii. (†) *Vide page* 31, *and* 36. (l) *Luke* ix. 23. (m) *John* xiii. 15.

works

works to give us an example. Yea the Scripture is full of many ſuch Paſſages, by which Men are taught that they themſelves muſt put their hands to the work, (n) *and work out their Salvation with fear and trembling.* (o) *That they muſt watch and pray always, and never faint.* Whereas thoſe Interpreters of the Scripture ſay, that Men muſt not do any thing, and that Jeſus Chriſt has ſatisfied all for them.

§. 104. I leave every one to his Freedom, to believe God or Men (of whom the Scripture ſays, (p) *that all are Liars*): For after I have declared unto them by this preſent Treatiſe, the Truths which God hath made known unto me, I have done my part; and have no particular Profit in their Salvation, or Damnation. And God has far leſs. Every one muſt make his Bed, as he intends to lie in it: He muſt make uſe of the Graces which God now offers unto him, or elſe reject them; for all the Good or Evil that ſhall enſue thereupon will come upon the Man himſelf. But he will be very unhappy, who for the ſhort Moment of this frail Life ſhall chuſe ſenſual Eaſe and Pleaſures for his Paradiſe; for in that Caſe he can have no other, whatever the Caſuiſts may promiſe him: for when Death comes they will find themſelves deceived, and ſhall not then find the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt to ſave them, but receive their Condemnation to endleſs Torments. For they who in this World will not follow the Example of Jeſus Chriſt, muſt not expect to follow him in his Glory; but to their Loſs ſhall hear that fearful Sentence, (q) *Go ye curſed into everlaſting fire; for I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink; I was naked, and ye cloathed me not; a ſtranger, and ye took me not in; ſick, and ye viſited me not.* This does entirely overthrow the Gloſſes of thoſe who ſay, that Jeſus Chriſt alone has ſatisfied all for Men: ſince we ſee by theſe Paſſages that at the great Judgment of God, Men ſhall be damned for not having done good Works; and others ſhall be ſaved for having done them. For what then will the Merits of Chriſt ſerve them, after the manner that they conceive of them, and as thoſe falſe Prophets labour now to perſwade the People? Thoſe wretched inconſiderate Souls, when in the Jaws of Death, will find themſelves in extream anguiſh, when they ſhall find too late, that the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, by their imaginary Application of them, cannot ſave them; no more than they who have deceived them by their falſe Promiſes.

(n) *Ph.* ii. 12. (o) *Luke* xviii. 1. (p) *Pſal.* cxvi. 11. (q) *Matth.* xxv. 41.

I exhort therefore all thoſe who ſhall attentively peruſe this Treatiſe, that they would not turn away from the Inſtructions contained in it, to give ear to the Doctrines of Men, whoſoever they be, or by what Name or Religion ſoever they may be called, though they take the name of Saints, or ſay they are ſent from God to reſtore *Iſrael*. For all is nothing but deceit, till we once ſee that in Truth *they take up the Spirit of the Primitive Church, eſtabliſh'd by Jeſus Chriſt; to which he gave the Evangelical-Law, to be obſerved to the end of the World, by all thoſe who deſire to be true Chriſtians.* For this is the laſt Law that God will give to Men. Hence the Apoſtle ſays, (q) *If an angel from heaven ſhould preach another Goſpel, believe him not*; for no other Law is neceſſary to Salvation. Hence *Chriſt* has ſo often warned us to take heed to our ſelves; telling us, that in the laſt Days, (r) *there ſhall ariſe many falſe Prophets who ſhall work great ſigns and wonders, and ſhall ſay: Lo here is Chriſt, and lo there is Chriſt*: Go not out, even tho' they work great Signs. Theſe are thoſe falſe Prophets foretold by Jeſus Chriſt, we muſt not follow them, for *they will deceive many, yea, if it were poſſible, they would ſeduce the very Elect.* Now I ſee by the Divine Light that theſe falſe Prophets are thoſe Reformers (†) who preach that Men may follow their corrupt Natures, and hope for Salvation only by the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, without doing any thing elſe: (ſ) Theſe are they *who ſow pillows under the arm-holes of ſinners; and ſtrengthen the hands of the wicked, that he ſhould not return from his wicked way, by promiſing him Life.* And many having given ear to them, they have ſeduc'd many, even well-meaning Perſons, covering their Deceit with a ſhew of Sanctity and ſeeming Vertue. Hence ſome pious and well-meaning People followed them, thinking they did well in it, and being told by thoſe Seducers that Chriſt was there, tho' in effect they have nothing of Chriſt but Words and Poſtures, which are as ſo many Masks or falſe Faces. They boaſt of the Goſpel and of Faith in Jeſus Chriſt; but by their Works they deny this Faith. And after thoſe firſt Reformers, many others alſo have followed them, ſaying in like manner, *Lo here is Chriſt; Lo there is Chriſt*, even as the firſt did; but the one is no more Chriſtian than the other; for all do equally ſeek their own Glory and their ſelf Intereſt, and each of them ſtrive to draw

(q) *Gal.* i. 8. (r) *Matth.* xxiv. 24. (†) *See* §. 122. (ſ) *Exek.* xiii. 17, 18, 22.

to themſelves as many People as they can, diverting them by all means from obſerving the Evangelical-Law, that thus they may pleaſe and flatter them, and draw from them Gain, Honor, and Applauſe.

§. 106. But the poor People are unmindful of the warning given them, (t) *to beware of thoſe who love the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts, and the chief ſeats in the ſynagogues, and greetings in the markets: who creep into houſes, and lead captive ſilly women: who are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.* Thoſe ſilly Women read what the Apoſtle ſays of this, but they are no: ſenſible that he ſpeaks of them; but being charm'd with the Gloſſes and fine Words of thoſe Guides, they let them cheat their Souls, and drag them along with them into Hell. This is the *Seduction* foretold by Jeſus Chriſt, and all they are call'd ſilly Women, who thro' Effeminacy and ſloth of Mind, ſuffer themſelves to be impoſed upon and led by the frivolous Diſcourſes of Men, when they may find the ſaving Truth in the Goſpel, without their pernicious Comments, or ſcholaſtick Diſcourſes; which ſerve only to deceive and ſeduce innocent and effeminate Souls, who being deſirous to live according to the Inclinations of corrupt Fleſh, ſuffer themſelves to be led hither and thither, according as they are prompted by their diverſe Luſts; and they do not lay to heart the end for which they were created, nor after what manner they muſt live to be Chriſtians: but amuſing themſelves with the ſpecious Diſcourſes of Men, they periſh with them. This makes me pity them greatly, without being able to help them: For if I ſhould tell them the truth as to their Happineſs and Miſery, immediately they call in the Clergy and the Learned to their help, to give their Judgment of what they do not know nor underſtand. And tho' they underſtood the Truth, yet they would not follow it, if it brought them not in temporal Gain, for this they are reſolv'd ſtill to cleave to. Every thing that does not make for this is their ſworn Enemy.

§. 107. Hence they perſecute me, becauſe I declare to them the ſaving Truths which God imparts unto me. And this is nothing ſtrange; for in all Ages the Prieſts and the Learned have perſecuted the Spirit of God. The Prieſts put to Death almoſt all the ancient Prophets; *Moſes* was perſecuted by the *Levites*; *Zacharias* and ſo many others were kill'd by them in the Temple. And Chriſt himſelf was perſecuted, and at laſt put to Death by the Prieſts and Scribes, becauſe he brought

(t) *Mark* xii. 38, 39, 40.

them

them the Light of Truth, which confounded their damnable Gloſſes and Traditions. And thus the Prieſts now would put me to Death, becauſe I have received from God his divine Light, which diſcovers, that no Body ſhall be ſaved, but he who ſhall embrace the Evangelical-Law, and put it in practice, that thereby the LOVE OF GOD may be recovered, which has been loſt by ſo many diverſe Sins. But though all thoſe Prieſts and Preachers ſhould kill me, they cannot make that ceaſe to be true, which God hath reveal'd unto me, namely, *that Jeſus Chriſt has now for the third time obtain'd of God his Father, Grace for Men to obſerve the Goſpel-Law: that is, for all thoſe that will embrace and follow it.*

§. 108. Wherefore I'm reſolved to publiſh this RENOVATION OF THE GOSPEL-SPIRIT, that I may declare the particular Means of attaining it; and to make it appear from whence the contempt of this Divine Law has ariſen, ſo that it is become a greater Scandal to Chriſtians, than Jeſus Chriſt was a Scandal to the *Jews*. And this comes from a certain blindneſs of Spirit, proceeding from the Seduction of ſo many falſe Prophets who have riſen up in *Chriſtendom*, and are yet Daily riſing: for we hear in many Places of Men who call themſelves the Prophets of God, or his Ambaſſadors for reſtoring *Iſrael*.

§. 109. I knew ſeveral Perſons in *Holland*, who own'd to me, that they were ſent from God on this Errand, that he had led them by the Hand from their Infancy, and choſen them to reſtore *Iſrael*; tho' in truth they were not true Chriſtians, but Men indulging their Paſſions, and living according to the Luſts of the Fleſh, who did eat, and drink, and marry, as the Scripture ſays thoſe did, who were given up to be deſtroyed by the univerſal Deluge in the Days of *Noah*; to ſhew that they had forgotten God, and had given up themſelves to pleaſe their Taſte, and follow their carnal Luſt, without any Regard to the univerſal Deſtruction with which *Noah* threatned them: And tho' the falſe Prophets of this Age do alſo proclaim the Judgments of God, and the Reſtoration of *Iſrael*, yet nevertheleſs neither they, nor their Followers do change their Lives, but live according to the natural Courſe of brutiſh Men, and know not what it is to be *born again in the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt*. They are ambitious to prophecy, and they advance many fine Specularions ſpun out of their vain and preſumptuous Imaginations; they draw People after them to go and reſtore *Iſrael*, before their Souls be reſtored to the Spirit of the primitive Chriſtians; and while the Diſorders that Sin has brought into their corrupt Nature, are ſtill unſubdued.

ſubdued. Thus they ſet up to impart to others what they have not themſelves; and they look for Chriſt's temporal Reign upon Earth, before his Spirit has any Life in them. They cannot therefore proſper in the reſtoring of *Iſrael*, nor can they themſelves arrive at the Kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt. For ſeveral of thoſe falſe Prophets, whom I knew, died in the midſt of their Career, and one is juſtly condemned to perpetual Impriſonment, becauſe of his Preſumption and Errors, boaſting that he had the Spirit of God, which was not true; there being more Ground to think that an evil Spirit diſturb'd his Mind, and made him fancy himſelf to be King of *Iſrael*, without any the leaſt Shadow of Truth; tho' yet many well-meaning Perſons ſuffered themſelves to be impoſed upon by his Errors.

§. 110. Therefore our Days may well be called perilous Times, ſince the Devil has ſo much Power over Mens Minds, as to make them believe Lies, and deſpiſe the Truth: For we ſee that all thoſe new Sectarians begin to have Followers, as the firſt Reformers had. But I hope God will put a ſtop to all this, and will reſtore his *Goſpel-Spirit* upon the Earth among thoſe who deſire to become real Chriſtians; and that by degrees he will exterminate all others by his laſt Plagues. For the End is at Hand: Since we live in the laſt times, in which we ought to conſider exactly all that the true Prophets have ſaid concerning them, that we may order our Lives accordingly, and make our Souls ready for the *Renovation of the Goſpel-Spirit*, which alone is *Noah*'s Ark, in which all ſhall be ſaved, who will really enter into it. But they who will not in their Practice embrace this Evangelical Law, ſhall all periſh in the laſt Plagues, even as thoſe periſhed in the Days of *Noah*, becauſe they would not hearken to him.

§. 111. In like manner I alſo have preached, tho' by Writing only, ſince the Year 1663. Several have believed me, but few have followed me; neither do I deſire Followers, ſince Men would be a hindrance to me; nor do I aim at ſetting up a new Sect; for I am ſeiz'd with Horror at thoſe which are already form'd. But I do earneſtly wiſh that many may embrace this Evangelical Doctrine which God makes me to put the Chriſtians of this Age in mind of, that they who thro' Ignorance are ſeduced from the true Faith in *Chriſt* by thoſe falſe Interpreters of the Scriptures, may deteſt their Deluſions, and receive the laſt Mercy of God, who for the third time has granted to his Son Jeſus Chriſt the Pardon of their Sins committed thro' Ignorance, and Grace to live again in his Spirit as real Chriſtians.

§. 112

§. 112. And you may eaſily believe, dear Reader, that in doing this, no Body can be deceived, for God never deceives any. He has promiſed to ſave all thoſe, whom he ſhall find clothed with the Spirit of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and none elſe. Therefore every one ought to lay his ſtate to heart, and labour after this Divine Diſpoſition, while there is time. For when the Seaſon of this laſt Grace and Mercy of God is paſt, there is no Converſion then to be expected, but an eternal Condemnation. Now our time of Trial is near its End; and there remains but a very little of it for working out our Salvation and doing Penitence. And my aim is, to ſhew you by this preſent Treatiſe the Way to do it; that none may be any longer deceived by falſe Converſions, by which ſo many have imagined that they are already Converted ſeveral Ways; ſome by changing their Party in Religion, others by ſetting up new Sects, others by abandoning the World to follow ſome one or other, who ſays he is a Prophet or ſent from God: All which things are far from the Truth. For now there is no more need of Prophets, becauſe we are arrived at the time in which all the ancient Prophecies ſhall be accompliſhed: neither is it needful that we embrace any other Religion than that which Jeſus Chriſt eſtabliſhed while he was upon the Earth; for God is not changeable, neither has he diſpenſed any other Doctrine or Law ſince that of Jeſus Chriſt, which is the Evangelical Law that ſhall never periſh. All Chriſtians ought to underſtand this Law, ſince the Goſpel has ſtill remained in their Hands in Writing, according to our Lord's Promiſe (a), *Lo, I am with you even to the End of the World.*

§. 113. But this is their Unhappineſs, that they read the Goſpel, but do not practiſe it; as if it were only a Hiſtory, and did not contain the things that we muſt do in order to obtain Salvation, which is a great Error; for to know what happen'd in Chriſt's time will avail us nothing, without putting it in practice, ſince this Knowledge will aſſuredly ſerve for our greater Condemnation; for we are told in holy Scripture, (b) That *he who knew his Maſter's Will, and did it not, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes; but he who knew it not, and did commit things worthy of ſtripes, ſhall be beaten with few ſtripes.* This ſhould make the Chriſtian tremble, who boaſts of his Knowledge of the Goſpel, and yet does not frame his Life according to it. It is to thoſe the Scripture ſpeaks, (c) *Thou*

(a) *Matth.* xxviii. 20. (b) *Luke* xii. 47, 48. (c) *Rom.* ii, *and* xxiii.

that

that makeſt thy Boaſt of the Law, through breaking the Law diſhonoureſt thou God? And I verily think, that the Heathens who lived according to the Inſtinct of their Natures, will not be ſo grievouſly puniſhed in Hell, as the Chriſtians who commit the ſame things, ſince theſe ſin againſt Light and Knowledge; whereas the Heathens ſinn'd thro' Ignorance, and had not the Opportunity of knowing the Law and the Precepts of the Goſpel. But Chriſtians will be inexcuſable at Death, ſince they might have found the Means of their Salvation, had they had an effectual Deſire to ſearch after them, and becauſe the Law of the Goſpel has been ſufficiently taught and inculcated into them.

§. 114. But they have choſen rather to follow their corrupt Natures, and to liſten to the Gloſſes and Doctrines of Men, than to the Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, who has taught them in ſo particular a manner all that they ought to do; he himſelf doing before them what they ought to do after him, even to the End of the World; for there will be no Change on God's part, the Evangelical Law being the laſt, and the moſt perfect, which contains within it the Subſtance of all the other Laws that God has given unto Men from their Creation downwards. Therefore it muſt be obſerved by all thoſe who would be ſaved; for from the time of *Adam* till now, never any obtain'd Salvation but they who in Subſtance obſerv'd the Goſpel-Law, the only Deſign whereof is to recover the LOVE OF GOD, which is the CHARITY of which St. *Paul* ſpeaks, (*d*) without which no Body could, or can ever be ſaved. And tho' one poſſeſs'd all the other Vertues together, it would profit him nothing without CHARITY; but he who poſſeſſeth CHARITY alone, poſſeſſeth alſo all the other Vertues, and cannot Periſh, even tho' he did not literally obſerve all the other Circumſtances of things contain'd in the Evangelical-Law. He obſerves enough, if he poſſeſs in his Heart true CHARITY; for this is the End for which God created him, and no other thing ſhall ever be required of Man, on God's part, but his LOVE. But Man himſelf on his part, has need to obſerve all the particular Duties of this Goſpel-Law, ſince he has violated the Law of the LOVE OF GOD, by the loving of ſo many different Objects inſtead of his God; all which he ought abſolutely to forſake, if he would return unto his Love, ſince we cannot at the ſame time have our Hearts ſet upon two ſuch different Objects, as are an Eternal God, and

(d) 1 *Cor.* xiii.

the

the Perishing Things of this World. For of necessity, he who loves God, must cease to love any Earthly Thing, (e) *and he who loves this World's Goods has not the Love of God abiding in him.*

§. 115. And this is a sure Mark by which it may be known whether one be truly Converted or not: for as long as he has his Heart set upon any transitory thing, he cannot fix it on God. He deceives himself if he believe it; and he deceives others if he affirms it. By this we may easily discern, that those changes of Parties in Religion, can never save a Man; even tho' he should throughout all his Life-time be running from one Religion to another, and every Day be making some new Sect, or following new Prophets, whether they be false or true. All this will avail nothing for our Salvation, if we do not faithfully observe and practise the EVANGELICAL-LAW, that by it we may return to the LOVE OF GOD, which Men have lost thro' Sin. For all those who followed our Lord himself, while he was upon Earth, did not obtain Salvation; no none but these only who put in practice his Gospel-Law, and so return'd to the LOVE OF GOD.

§. 116. Wherefore none can any longer be seduc'd thro' Ignorance, if they will but attentively peruse this present Treatise, which declares sincerely all sorts of Truths; and points out the means of being really quickned and made alive to the Spirit of Jesus Christ; after that all Men are now dead to Grace, some thro' Ignorance or Seduction; others by opposing these Truths out of mere Malice, as many do at this time. For since I began to declare the Truths that God has imparted to me, I have been Persecuted, Robb'd, Contemned and Reproach'd, as one seducing the People. And I am yet forc'd to conceal my self, that I may preserve my Life, which the Priests of the several Sects would deprive me of, if it were in their Power. Which I need not wonder at, for since they thus treated Jesus Christ their Saviour, they may well do so by his Creature. And this does not trouble me, seeing Jesus Christ said; (f) *Rejoice when Men shall speak evil of you falsely for my sake.* I rejoice that I never did any thing in all my Life, for which I might justly be persecuted; and that the only Reason for which they Persecute me, is, because I speak the Truth, and discover Mens Errors; for which they ought to love me, and esteem my Warnings as a great Favour which God hath bestow'd on Men in these last

(e) 1 *John* ii. 15. (f) *Matth.* 5. 10, 11, 12.

times;

times, in ſending them yet once more his Light of Truth.

§. 117. This is the Holy Spirit which Chriſt promiſed to his Apoſtles, when he aſcended into Heaven; ſaying, (g) *I will ſend you the holy Spirit, who ſhall teach you all truth*; This now I have received by his Grace, and this alſo all the Souls who will practice this Evangelical Doctrine, ſhall receive: for the time is now come wherein Jeſus Chriſt has obtain'd for Men the Remiſſion of their Sins, and Grace to keep this Goſpel-Law; that is, for all thoſe who will receive and follow it.

§. 118. Let no Body then excuſe himſelf as to this Matter; for this Grace is univerſal for all Men, even as it alſo was for *Adam*'s Sin; and for the particular Sins of all Men, when Jeſus Chriſt came to redeem them by taking our Mortality upon him. For there never was, nor ever will be any partiality in God. He has elected all thoſe who love him; and he rejects all thoſe who cleave by their Love to temporal and fading Things.

§. 119. Lo this is the only true *Predeſtination* or Preſcience of God; and there neither is, nor ſhall be any other. Whatever they may otherwiſe boldly aſſert concerning this, is nothing but the Errors and Inventions of corrupt Men, who flattering themſelves in their Sins, ſay, that nothing happens without the Divine Decree; that their Negligence or Perverſeneſs may not be blam'd, but all may be attributed to the Preſcience of God; and that when they are convicted of their evil Deeds, they may pretend that the Foreknowledge of God was the cauſe of 'em; fancying that they were predeſtinated to thoſe Evils, and ſo lay all the blame on God, and excuſe themſelves. They ſay God has not granted them his Grace, and that they can do no good of themſelves, for that they feel themſelves inclin'd to all Evil.

§. 120. This has ſome ſhew of Truth, and even of Humility alſo; tho' in effect it is nothing but Lying and Pride. For Jeſus Chriſt obtain'd for all Grace to do well, immediately after *Adam*'s Fall. And this Grace was again granted them of new, when he cloathed himſelf with their Mortality, and taught them by what means they might enjoy and preſerve this Grace; namely, by doing good thro' the aſſiſtance thereof, and not by the weakneſs of their corrupt Nature, which is really incapable of doing any good. Hence our Lord ſaid to his Apoſtles, as I mentioned before, (h) *that it was impoſſible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God; but it*

(g) *John* xiv. 16. (h) *Luke* xviii. 27.

was not impoſſible to the Grace he received from God. And therefore it ought not now to be ſaid, that it is impoſſible to keep the Goſpel-Law, ſince Jeſus Chriſt has obtain'd of his Father Grace for all Men to do it, who will effectually embrace his Goſpel-Law, whether they be Chriſtians or Heathens, of whatſoever State, Quality, Nation or Religion they may be. This Grace and Mercy is obtained for all thoſe in general who deſire to become true Chriſtians. To this every one is predeſtin'd, if he will follow the Goſpel-Law, whether he be *Jew*, *Turk*, Heathen, or of any other the moſt barbarous Nation and Religion in the World: for the fulneſs of time is come, in which the Lord has ſaid to his Servants, (i) *Go into the ſtreets, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind, and bring them to my wedding, that the table may be full, for the oxen are kill'd, and all things are ready.*

§. 121. They who read this Parable in the Goſpel, do not underſtand what they read, and do not know when it ſhall be fulfilled; neither ſhould I know it if God had not reveal'd it to me; and ſaid, that *the Eternal Father married his Son with the human Nature, when his Son Jeſus Chriſt put on its Mortality, that he then entred into a Covenant with his Creature, and invited to this marriage Feaſt Chriſtians in particular; but they had rendred themſelves unworthy of it, and would not make themſelves ready for this Wedding: And when he ſent his Apoſtles and other his faithful Servants to invite each of them in particular to come to the wedding, they began to excuſe themſelves, and none of them would go to this marriage Feaſt. One ſaid, I have bought five Yoke of Oxen, and I go to prove them; another, I have bought a piece of Ground, and I muſt needs go and ſee it; And another ſaid more peremptorily, I have married a Wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the Lord hearing this from his Servants, was wroth; and ſaid, that none of thoſe Men which were bidden ſhould taſte of his Supper; commanding his Servants to go out into the High-ways, and invite as many as they could find to the Marriage, ſince they who were bidden had excuſed themſelves, and were not worthy.* After the ſame manner alſo did our Lord Jeſus, when he ſaw that thoſe of the Houſe of *Iſrael* would not embrace his Goſpel-Law, nor obey it, he ſaid unto his Apoſtles, (k) *Go ye into all the World, and teach all Nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.*

(i) *Matth.* xxii. (k) *Matth.* xxviii. 19.

§. 122. By

§. 122. By which we may eaſily perceive, that God has not choſen *Peter* and rejected *Paul*, as the modern Predeſtinarians would have us to believe; who ſay, that they themſelves are predeſtinated to Salvation; ſeeing Jeſus Chriſt had no reſpect even to the *Jews*, who were then his own People, and in the Opinion of Men preferable to all other Nations; and tho' Chriſt himſelf ſaid to the *Canaanitiſh* Woman, (*l*) *that he was come to ſave the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael, and that it was not meet to take the childrens bread and give it unto Dogs.* Nevertheleſs when he ſaw that his own People ſlighted the Graces which he had obtain'd for them of his eternal Father, he was pleas'd to pour them out upon Strangers; whom he praiſes, ſaying to the ſame *Canaanitiſh* Woman, *I have not found ſo great Faith, no not in* Iſrael. Therefore the *Predeſtinarians* of this Age, ought not to imagine that they are the Elect; neither the *Lutherans*, that they are the Evangelical People; nor the *Mennoniſts* or *Anabaptiſts*, that they are the Regenerate; nor the *Quakers*, that they are the illuminated ones; nor the *Romaniſts*, that they are the Catholicks; while none of them live according to the Evangelical Law; for without this true Practice of Holineſs, all theſe are vain and empty Names, and God abhors thoſe vain Boaſtings and ſpecious Titles. *He ſearches the Heart and tries the Reins, that he may judge every one according to his Works*, and not according to his Profeſſion, or the imaginary Opinion he has of himſelf. For all Mens Souls are the Spouſes of Jeſus Chriſt, whom God his Father would have joyned with him in an everlaſting Marriage-bond and Covenant; but thoſe ungrateful Perſons have not been faithful unto him, but have forſaken their lawful Bridegroom, and committed Adultery with the Creatures; and plac'd their Love on them, which was due to God only: and thus they have been taken in the act of Adultery, and deſerved to be ſtoned and to be put to Eternal Death without appeal. But their moſt gracious Husband would yet be once again reconciled to thoſe criminal Souls, upon condition that they turning away wholly from their Whoredoms, and returning to the Loyalty and Fidelity they had promiſed, would ſubject themſelves to the Evangelical Law of their lawful Husband, and keep it faithfully, without falſifying it any more, or committing Adultery with the Doctrines of Men. And upon theſe Terms Jeſus Chriſt, the Divine Bridegroom of our Souls, interceeded for Pardon to his unfaithful Spouſes, and now for the laſt time has obtain'd

(*l*) *Matth.* xv. 24, 25.

Reconciliation and Favour for them.

§. 123. Wherefore the marriage Feaſt of this Alliance will be ſolemniz'd: And tho' the *Jews* who were firſt invited did excuſe themſelves; yea, and carnal Chriſtians alſo, who will obſtinately follow the Motions of their corrupt Nature; yet there ſhall be ſome now who will deny themſelves and follow their lawful Husband in the Evangelical Life, leaving thoſe, who excuſe themſelves from this, to periſh thro' their own Fault; for all are now called, and the Divine Light is given them for Food to their Souls.

§. 124. Nevertheleſs God will not compel them, except by the Rods which they have merited, when from the bottom of their Hearts they ſhall pray to God that they may be drawn to obey the Goſpel Law, ſaying; *Conſtrain Lord our Rebellious Wills.* Theſe ſhall be helped forward by Chaſtiſements, becauſe their Rebellions are not voluntary, but proceed from their habitual Frailties, which they cannot overcome but by Force and Violence. But the willing Brides ſhall embrace the Evangelical Life with Joy, and ſhall be the faithful Spouſes who will follow the Bridegroom whitherſoever he goes, and whatever happens will never forſake him any more: for it is an everlaſting Covenant, and the World is near its end, ſo that they ſhall not be left any longer in Danger of falling into Infidelity.

§. 125. And therefore happy are the Souls, who ſhall accept of this laſt Mercy from God, and embrace the Evangelical Law for the ſhort time they have yet to live upon Earth: for tho' the laſt Day of the general Judgment is not yet at the Door; yet it happens to every Man in particular, when he departs out of this Life. For he is then judged without any Reverſion of the Sentence, and in whatſoever State he is then found, in that he ſhall abide; ſince his time of Converſion is then over, and ſhall not return any more. It is ſafeſt then to follow the Advice of the Holy Scripture, which ſaith, (m) *To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts*; being afraid leſt the Lord harden your Hearts as he did that of *Pharaoh*: For after this laſt Mercy, no other Seaſon is to be look'd for. This will be the end of the mortal World, and the beginning of that Eternal Life which ſhall never end for thoſe who in this Valley of Tears ſhall have followed the Evangelical Doctrine. Theſe only ſhall be Bleſſed and Happy, and none other, whatever their Quality, Con-

(m) *Exodus* xvii. 2, 7. *Numb.* xiv. 22. *Pſal.* xcv. 7. *Heb.* iii. 7, 8.

dition

dition or Religion may be, or has been. None have been, or ever ſhall be ſaved without being cloathed with the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, and following in Subſtance his Evangelical Law.

§. 126. For tho' the Law of *Moſes* and the other natural Laws did differ in Matter from the Evangelical Law, yet they had all in general the ſame End and the ſame Aim; namely, to make Men die to their corrupt Nature, and to live again to the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt which is ſupernatural. For when God forbad by his Laws the eating of Swine's Fleſh, and other Fat or unclean Creatures, he did this only to repreſs their Senſuality: Thus alſo they were not to eat of two ſorts of things at once with their Bread, as Fleſh and Butter; or Butter and Cheeſe. And when the Law diſcharged the Husband, at certain times from coming near his Wife, it was done for the repreſſing of Luſt: And when it enjoyn'd them ſo many Ceremonies and external Rites in their Prayers, Garments, Veſſels, and other things that concerned their Subſiſtence; this was done to oppoſe their Sloth and Negligence: and to give them continual Occaſions of remembring God, by the Obſervance of his Laws, which extended to all that they ought to do, or leave undone.

§. 127. For God had no need that they ſhould obſerve all theſe things; and it mattered him little what they did Eat or Drink; what Apparel they put on, or after what manner they Prayed; whether their Veſſels were New or Old; and whether married People had two Beds to ſleep apart: but the Men of that Age had need to obſerve all theſe things that they might return to the LOVE OF GOD, which they had loſt by ſo many different Ways as God had given them diverſe Laws. The very ſame thing happen'd when the Goſpel-Law was preſcribed. For it was not, becauſe God cared whether Men were Rich or Poor, that he enjoyn'd them *Poverty of Spirit*: neither was it any profit to him that we ſhould deny our ſelves, or bear our Croſs to follow Jeſus Chriſt; for he has no Croſſes to lay upon us; nor reaps he any Profit by commanding us to deny our ſelves, or to leave Father and Mother and all things. For having created all things for Man, he would be well pleaſed that he could enjoy them: But Man is now become ſo miſerable by his Sin, that he can no longer enjoy theſe Things, without placing his Affections upon them, and withdrawing them from God. For this Cauſe Jeſus Chriſt gave them his Goſpel-Law, which is ſo neceſſary to Salvation, that without it none can recover the LOVE OF GOD which Men have loſt by ſo many kinds of Sins; as Pride, Avarice, Luxury, and other Vices, to which Men

did cleave with all their Hearts, inſtead of having them fix'd upon God alone; for which end only he created them, and for no other. But Men have now rendred themſelves ſo feeble and impotent, that they can ſcarce ſee, or hear, or touch any thing that is Beautiful, Sweet, and Pleaſant, but preſently their Love is ſet upon it, and turned away from God.

§. 128. This is that which made it neceſſary to give them as many diverſe kinds of Laws, as there were diverſe kinds of Sins into which they had fallen: and without obſerving of theſe, it is impoſſible for them (by reaſon of their great Frailty and Weakneſs,) to return to the only End of their Creation, *viz.* the LOVE OF GOD. Conſider I pray you, friendly Reader, whether thoſe ignorant Doctors and Preachers had ground to teach Chriſtian People, that they could not keep the Evangelical Law, becauſe of their Frailties; when it is to help thoſe Frailties that Chriſt has brought them his Goſpel-Law! Is there not too much Ground to ſay, that Men are become very Deceitful, with reſpect to God's Diſpenſations; and that they ſtudy to pervert his Laws, the true Phyſick of Souls; and to give them venomous Poiſon to make them die that eternal Death, which is prepared for the Devil and his Angels? For God gave his Laws to Men, as wholſome Phyſick for their Maladies; and in the mean time they look upon them as *Burthens and Chaſtiſements from God, by which he conſtrains them to do things impoſſible to their Frailty.*

§. 129. Theſe are certainly moſt abſurd Opinions, which notwithſtanding are received by many for great Truths; by which even thoſe who have the moſt tender Conſciences at this time do order their Lives, and quiet their Minds; being perſwaded that this is true, and that it is impoſſible for them to keep the Goſpel-Law, becauſe their Preachers tell them ſo: for they have forgotten that the Scripture ſays of our Days, (n) *Your Leaders make you to err.* And thus they build their Salvation upon the Sayings and Opinions of Men; who have fallen from true Sanctity themſelves, and having loſt the Truth of God, lean to frivolous and deceitful Opinions, which they propagate one to another; and thus make themſelves to believe Lies inſtead of the Truth. By which means many thouſands do Periſh, and even thoſe who are right intention'd. Of this our Saviour did abundantly warn us when he ſaid, (o) *Beware of falſe Prophets which come in my Name: They ſhall deceive many, yea, if it were poſſible, the very Elect.* Certainly our Lord Jeſus Chriſt could not deſcribe more clear-

(n) *Iſai.* iii. 12. (o) *Matth.* vii. 15.

by the Seduction of the learned of this Age, who perſwade Men, *That they ſhall be ſaved by the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, tho' they live according to the Motions of their corrupt Nature: and that they are predeſtinated to Salvation, tho' they will not work out the ſame with Fear and Trembling*; as the Apoſtle Counſels them to do (*p*). They cannot plead Ignorance, having the Scripture in their Hands, and the Warnings of *Chriſt*, who foretold all theſe things; as did alſo the ancient Prophets, when they ſpeak of the Guides of Souls that were to come in the laſt Times, *that they ſhall preach Peace and Safety, when the Danger is moſt great; and that ſhall ſow Pillows to the Armholes of Sinners, and ſtrengthen the Hands of the Wicked, that he ſhould not return from his wicked way by promiſing him Life.* (*q*) Thus making them live at Eaſe in their Sins, or in their corrupt Nature, which is Damnation it ſelf: for this Corruption alone has damn'd Men, and undone them all in *Adam*; ſo that all without any exception are born Children of Wrath and Perdition; and if they live in this Corruption, they live in a State of Damnation; and if they die in this State, they aſſuredly go to Hell and endleſs Torments, whatever thoſe Commentators and Flatterers may make them beleive. For Men will not be ſaved only by believing their Preachers; ſeeing they might eaſily find the Truth, if they had a real deſire to ſearch after it.

§. 130. I bring no new Law, neither will I induce any body to follow me; for I have no need of any, neither do I ſeek after any thing. God hath beſtow'd enough on me for the Suſtentation of my Life, and all Men are a hindrance to me; not do I ſeek their Honors and Pleaſures; becauſe I find more delight in God than in all the Pleaſures of the World. I do therefore deſpiſe their Honors, becauſe they are vain; and Men themſelves are Ignorant, who do not know what they ought to Eſteem or Honor. And therefore no Body ought to imagine that any particular Intereſt of mine, moves me to declare the Truths which God hath made known unto me, but the Chriſtian Compaſſion I have to ſee ſo many People Periſh thro' the blindneſs of their Minds, while in the mean time they think they ſee clearly.

§. 131. This Jeſus Chriſt has told them from the ſame Bowels of Compaſſion, ſaying, (*r*) *If ye ſhould ſay we are blind, ye ſhould ſee clearly; but now ye ſay, we ſee, therefore are ye blind.* In the mean time many are inſenſible of this their

(p) *Phil.* ii. 12. (q) *Ezek.* xiii. 18. *Jer.* xxiii. 14. (r) *John* ix. 41.

Blind-

Blindneſs, and delight in it more than to know the Light of Truth; becauſe this contradicts their Corruption, which much more ſenſibly affects them, than their eternal Welfare, which remains yet Inviſible. Now they eſteem greatly the things that they ſee and feel, forgetting what the Apoſtle ſays, (*f*) *that Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard the things which God hath prepared for them that Love him.* Is not a Man his own great Enemy when he lets himſelf be lull'd aſleep by Mens Words? for they deceive him, till he ſleep the Sleep of Eternal Death; tho' he was created by God for a Life of endleſs Bliſs and Felicity. And this a Man gives up for a little empty Satisfaction, which thoſe Flatterers give to corrupt Nature. Does not he make a bad Choice, who loves rather, during this ſhort Life, to enjoy ſenſual and carnal Delights and Pleaſures, than to embrace an Evangelical Life that he may arrive at everlaſting Bliſs? He is certainly cruel to himſelf, who makes choice of ſo ſhort a Paradiſe, where the Joys end in Sorrows, and the moſt flattering Pleaſures in Anguiſh and Pain; when he might make choice of a laſting Joy, and of moſt pure and unmixed Delights that will never end.

§. 132. A Man ought not to imagine that he can enjoy two Paradiſes, the one after the other; for this will never be. It is abſolutely neceſſary that we part with the one or the other. This a Man may eaſily comprehend by his natural Judgment, ſuppoſing once the Truths of God. For if he created Man that he might be loved by him, he cannot ſave him when he wilfully refuſes to abide in this LOVE: for in that Caſe he acts contrary to the Intention, and purpoſes of God, who will not take his Enemy to be his Companion, or him who Studies to ſubvert his divine Purpoſe, tho' it is ſo perfect. For it would not become even a mortal Man to do this unto his Equal; and to take into his Houſe his Enemy, whoſe Aim is to overturn all his Purpoſes. Yea, he would moſt juſtly drive away ſuch a Fellow, rather than take him for his Domeſtick. How then can a Man hope to enter into the heavenly Paradiſe after Death, when throughout his whole Life he has acted quite contrary to the end for which he was created, and has voluntarily withdrawn his Love from God, that he might place it on the delights of his Palate, the Luſts of his Fleſh, on Wealth, worldly Honors, and other ſenſual Pleaſures? Ought we not to judge aright that to him belongs only the Paradiſe which he has choſen, and not that which God had prepared for him, becauſe he hath deſpiſed and rejected it,

(*f*) 1 *Cor.* ii. 9.

that

that he might chuſe himſelf one after his own Faſhion? Muſt he not content himſelf with the Choice he has made, inſtead of claiming the Paradiſe that God hath prepared for thoſe who live and die in the LOVE OF GOD, and for none other; for none can be ſaved but by this LOVE?

§. 133. Let every one take heed, that he be not deceived by the vain Diſcourſes and Imaginations of Men, who have invented ſo many Kinds of Devotions and Orders in Religion, to put out of Mens Minds the Neceſſity of this LOVE OF GOD, and make them hope for Salvation by ſome outward Things. Hence one believes he is holy, becauſe he is call'd a Catholick; another thinks he is elected, becauſe he is *Calviniſt*; another fancies himſelf Evangelical, for that he is *Lutheran*; another believes he is regenerate, being a *Mennoniſt* or *Anabaptiſt*; another thinks he is led by the Holy Ghoſt, being of the Sect of *Quakers*; and thus it is of every Sect or Religion. Each places the Hopes of his Salvation upon the Inventions of Men, who have ſaid, *Lo here is Chriſt, lo there is Chriſt*, (t) tho' Jeſus Chriſt has ſaid, *believe them not; neither go out*; yet every one believes them, and goes out from the Evangelical Law, to cleave to the Doctrines of Men, who ſtrive ſtill more and more to draw the World after them; and have formed Sects, Churches, and various Means of Salvation, every one of them after their own Mode and Faſhion, upon which they reſt as upon a falſe Pillow: but they ſhall find, when Death awakens them, that they have had only a hard Stone for a Bolſter. For none of all theſe things can make them happy, neither will God own any but thoſe who are cloathed with the Spirit of his Son Jeſus Chriſt. And tho' they have taken the Name of Chriſtians, yet Chriſt will ſay to them as he did to their Companions, (who had ſaid (u) *Thou haſt taught in our Streets, yea, we have Propheſied in thy Name*) *I know you not*: for he will never know any for Chriſtians, but ſuch as ſhall have kept his Evangelical Law. Wherefore every Man ought to take heed to himſelf, and not to lean to any other thing but the Doctrine of the Goſpel; for in effect without this, all the various kinds of Devotion and Piety are nothing but Amuſements. And when thoſe Devotions are real, and not otherwiſe, they are uſeful only as means to draw us to the Love of God. But all the ſorts of ſeeming Piety and Devotion, will lead only to a greater Condemnation, ſo far will they be from helping forward to Salvation.

(t) *Matth.* xxiv. 23. (u) *Matth.* vii. 22.

§. 134. Ma-

§. 134. Many also deceive themselves, who think to build their Salvation upon external good Works. Some think to be saved by saying Daily a great many vocal Prayers, or by giving themselves to holy Meditations; others, by giving out of their abundance to the Poor; others, by frequenting the Churches, or Sacraments; some by fasting, others by reading the Scriptures. But believe me, dear Reader, all these will avail nothing for Salvation, without the LOVE OF GOD, and this Love cannot be obtain'd but by means of a *Gospel Life and Practice*; for this is the only means to recover the LOVE OF GOD which we have lost by our Sins. This the Apostle declares abundantly when he says, (z) *Tho' I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and my Body to be burned; tho' I speak with the Tongues of Men and of Angels; tho' I had the Gift of Prophecy, and Wrought all Miracles, &c. and have no* CHARITY, which is the LOVE OF GOD, *it profiteth nothing.*

§. 135. This I cannot too often inculcate, since every one boasts of having the Scriptures, and of believing them, while few or none understand them so as to put them in practice. Men interpret and wrest those sacred Writings, every one after his own Way, and according to the Looseness of his Mind and Manners, and imagine they have true Faith, tho' none of these Sectarians have one Grain of true Faith, but a speculative kind of Faith, founded upon the Imagination of some Author or Leader, who, in effect, have not been endued with the Light of the holy Spirit, but have been acted only by the Impulse of their natural Senses, seeing they were not regenerated in the Spirit of Jesus Christ: and their Followers tread the same Path, and blindly follow those who have gone before them. One maintains *Luther*'s Doctrine, another *Calvin*'s, another that of some other Author of a Sect; so that they are no longer Christians, but *Lutherans*, *Calvinists*, or the Disciples of other Persons who have advanced some new Opinions, whose Names they have retained, and glory to be of their Religion. Consider, dear Reader, what Degeneracy has befallen Christendom since it was divided into these Schisms and Parties. They have deserted the Law and Doctrine of Jesus Christ, and taken up the Institutions and Doctrines of Men, as if these were become new Saviours, tho' they were nothing but sinful and imperfect Creatures, and followed their corrupt Natures, hating and despising one another, and by this means have sown Dissension and Hatred

(z) 1 *Cor.* xiii.

among

among Christians; whereas Jesus Christ did so earnestly recommend to them to love one another, giving them this MUTUAL LOVE, for a sure Mark, by which it may be known that they are his *Disciples* indeed. But Men are now become so blind, that they discern not the Light of Truth, tho' it shines in the Gospel as bright as the Sun at Noon-day. There it appears clearly, that there is but one true Faith; one true God; one true Church; while in the mean time Men form all those Divisions, and so many divers Faiths and Creeds, that sincere well-meaning People know not to what Hand to turn, that they may find the true Faith, the true God, and the true Church; since each of those different Parties of Religion lay claim to these, tho' not one of them agrees the one with the other. For the true Faith does not alter, the true God is not mutable, and the true Church is one and universal; and we neither have, nor ever can have, any other Saviour but Jesus Christ, nor any other saving Doctrine, but that which he has left us in his Gospel. Therefore we must not go by four Ways, seeing there is but one only Way that leads to Salvation, which is Jesus Christ: for he himself says, *I am the Way, the Truth and the Life* (a). *By me if any Man enter in, he shall be saved. I am the Door.* How then would Men enter into *Paradise* by another Door than by him? Truly the Opinions of those Founders of new Sects, or Guides, are all false Doors or Windows, by which Thieves and Robbers enter, that they may steal the Gospel-pearl, and root out of Mens Hearts a Doctrine of so great value, that they may place there some Images and Idols of Mens Fancies, that have a fair Shew, and a Cover of Truth, tho' in Reality they are Lies; for the Doctrine of those Sectarians is quite contrary to the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, and they seem to have contriv'd it for no other End, but to destroy and root out God's Law, and the Doctrine of the Gospel: And they have found out so many Arguments, Distinctions and Glosses, that they have perswaded not a few of the well-meaning to believe a Lie rather than the Truth.

§. 136. Of this I have daily Experience; for I no sooner begin to declare the Truths which are communicated to me from God, but I am presently oppress with Persecution and Contempt; yea, they hunt after my Life for no other Cause, but for having declared the Truth of God. Hence they say, That I would subvert all Religions, all Schools and Colleges, tho' I never contradict any of these, because I do not know

(a) *John* xiv. 6.

them

them at the Bottom, neither will I inform my ſelf about them. For to know the Tree, it is enough for me that I ſee the Fruit; for the Scripture ſays (*b*), That *the Tree is known by its Fruit.* Now I perceive that all thoſe Churches are departed from the *Love of God*, and that all Schools and Colleges are much the ſame: For commonly we ſee Students return from the Schools and Colleges much worſe than when they went to them; as if they had ſpent their time there in learning to lye handſomly, that they may maintain Evil; to diſpute and reaſon nicely, that they may defend it; and to give themſelves to Speculations, that they may be able to deceive cunningly, and procure to themſelves the Reputation of being Great and Learned Men. Lo, this is all the Fruit which the Learned bring out of the Schools for their own Souls, and the Venom which they derive from them for the poyſoning of others. For they have invented in the Schools ſo many Arguments, and ſpecious Words, that they have ſubverted the whole Law of God, and all the Precepts of the Goſpel; and having robb'd Men of thoſe two Means and Helps, they do moſt certainly bereave them of the End alſo, namely, the LOVE OF GOD; *And thus they ſhut up the Kingdom of Heaven againſt Men, and neither go in themſelves, nor ſuffer them that are entring, to go in*, as the Scripture ſpeaketh (*c*). Obſerve, I pray you, what State the Chriſtian World is now reduced to, where things are managed only by Politicks, human Regards, and the Deſire of Vain-glory. They confer ſplendid Names and Titles of Honour upon the Learned, ſuch as Doctors, Profeſſors, your Eminence, *&c.* to amuſe and blind the Minds of the Unlearned, who imagine that theſe Names do denote in them ſingular Wiſdom or Vertue; tho' in effect there be nothing in them but Vice and Ignorance, they calling themſelves Chriſtians, when, in the ſight of God, they have not in their Hearts the firſt Beginnings of Chriſtianity, nor any Spark of the true Love of God; ſeeing they love themſelves only, their Honour, Eaſe and Pleaſure.

§. 137. And becauſe I declare, that God makes known theſe things to me, the Learned ſeek to kill me, they reproach, deſpiſe and calumniate me, to make me be hated by the People; and they perſwade them that the Spirit of God which guides me, is the Devil. And when they can find out no Evil in my Life and Doctrine, they ſeek out imaginary Evils, and utter Lyes againſt the Truth of God, that they may turn away the People from it; as if this Divine Truth were a

(b) *Matth.* xii. 33. (c) *Matth.* xxiii. 13.

certain

certain Plague or Poiſon for Souls, tho' it be their only Phyſick; and tho' in truth, no Salvation is to be hoped for, but by the Goſpel-Truths which I advance. None can readily be deceived in this; for tho' I had never been born, and had never written one Letter; or tho' they ſhould preſently kill me, yet this could never ceaſe to be always true; namely,

I. *That God created Man only for this End, that he might be loved by him.* And,

II. *That Man no ſooner withdrew his Affections from God, to love himſelf and the other Creatures, than he became the Enemy of his God, and would not comply with the Deſigns which God had on Man to take his Delight with him; and by this meant Man damned himſelf, and deſerting the Love of God, the Fountain of all Good, he fell into all kind of Evil, which conſiſts in the Privation of all Good.*

III. *And after that miſerable Man had thus undone himſelf, Jeſus Chriſt interceeded for him with his Eternal Father, and obtain'd for this ungrateful Creature the Remiſſion of his Sin, and the Grace to do Penance for it, that by a thorow Repentance he might obtain God's Grace, that he might return to his* LOVE, *which he had loſt thro' his own Fault; for Man was created free, that he might for ever abide in the* LOVE OF GOD, *and never fall from it.*

IV. *And ſeeing he muſt recover this* LOVE OF GOD *out of his free and willing Choice, it was needful that he ſhould teſtifie by his Contrition and Penitence his unfeigned Sorrow for having loſt his* LOVE, *and that he ſhould effectually make uſe of the Grace obtain'd for him by Jeſus Chriſt, and employ all the time of his Trial, which is this mortal Life, in bewailing his Sins, and doing Penitence for them, ſince by the great Mercy of God he had obtain'd the Grace to do it, and had the means at hand to fulfil this Penitence, in the Curſe which the Earth had received by his Sin, ſo that it muſt be tilled, and Man muſt eat his Bread in the Sweat of his Face.*

§. 138. By which it is evident, that Man did not obtain the LOVE OF GOD after his Sin, but only the Grace to do Penitence for it, until that thereby he might by his Free-will, ſtrengthned by the Divine Grace, recover at laſt this LOVE OF GOD, which he had voluntarily ſo ſhamefully loſt. But they who do not underſtand the Meaning of the Scriptures, confound the *Grace to do Penitence*, received in *Adam* by Jeſus Chriſt, with the *Grace of his Love*, or Eternal Bleſſedneſs, which is a groſs Miſtake. For if God had reſtored to Man after the Fall of *Adam* his Love and Eternal Sal-

Salvation without any Condition, certainly *Adam* would have done fooliſhly to have ſpent 900 Years in Sorrow and Labour after the Remiſſion of his Sin, and all Men after him would have ſubjected themſelves to unprofitable Sufferings and Labours, having obtain'd Salvation, by their Father *Adam*'s Pardon; how could they without murmuring, ſuffer Hunger, Thirſt, Wearineſs, Cold, Heat, Miſeries, Diſeaſes, and Death it ſelf in this Life, after having obtain'd of God ſo abſolute a Pardon, as the Gift of Salvation without doing Penitence for Sin? Can we imagine that God, being Perfection it ſelf, could beſtow ſo imperfect Graces? and that after having reſtor'd Salvation to Man, he would let him abide ſo long in ſuch a Gulf of Miſeries? This cannot be ſaid without Blaſphemy, ſeeing all God's Gifts and Graces are compleat and perfect; and to ſpeak freely, God could not leave Man in ſuch a Sink of Miſeries as this wretched Life is, after having entirely forgiven him his Fault, and reſtored him his firſt Love after his Sin; for all the Gifts of Grace are ſo perfect and compleat, that nothing is wanting or defective in them.

§. 139. Wherefore God would not by his abſolute Power and Authority reſtore to Man the Salvation which he had loſt thro' his own Fault, nor conſtrain him to live again in the Love of God, after having voluntarily deſerted it: but by the Merits and Interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, he manifeſted his Goodneſs towards Man, by affording him *Grace and Time to do Penitence* for his Sins, that by means of this Penitence he might recover the *Grace of the Love of God*, which he had ſo ſhamefully loſt by his own Free-will; and which he will never recover, but by ſtriving againſt, reſiſting, and doing Violence to his Self-will, his Self-love, and corrupt Nature, making this Old Man to die in him, that he may live again to the new, which is Jeſus Chriſt. For God, who at firſt created us of his own Will only, will not ſave us by it alone, after having given us full Liberty, by which he has made us as little Gods, independent from every Creature, and having Dominion over them, and over our own Will, which God will never force. He was pleaſed to make us free Creatures, which Liberty, whether we uſe it well or ill, ſhall never be taken from us. This Free-will will remain always with us in this World, and even to all Eternity, whether in Heaven or Hell. The Saints ſhall not praiſe God in Heaven, but with their own Wills, and the Damned ſhall curſe him in Hell with their own perverſe Wills. For the Gifts of God are without Repentance; and ſeeing he was pleaſed

to

to create Man a Creature altogether free, he will never retract this Gift, however Man uſe it.

§. 140. Hence it is, that he did not immediately reſtore the LOVE OF GOD to Man after his Sin, but only the Grace to do Penitence for it, and to amend his Fault. And this indeed was an Inſtance of great Mercy, that Man, after having ſo highly offended his God, and loſt his Title to Eternal Happineſs, might recover this Grace, upon Condition of undergoing a ſhort time of Penitence here, and of repenting for his Sin. This Mercy of God to Man in forgiving him his Sins, and affording him the Grace to do Penitence for them, was far greater than if God had downright pardon'd him, and given him the Grace to recover his LOVE, without obliging him to do Penitence for his Sins, and without permitting the Earth to be curſed, and all things to be corrupted by Sin. For it is to be feared, that Man would have quickly relaps'd into new Sins, when he found that, as formerly, he enjoy'd all ſorts of Delights, ſuch as *Adam* had; for we ſee Men have withdrawn their Love from God, and plac'd it on the Creatures, and on themſelves, even after they ſaw themſelves ſo miſerable, weak and imperfect, ſubject to all ſorts of Diſeaſes, and to Death; even as the Beaſts, and all the Creatures, doing Miſchief to Man ſince his Sin, whereas formerly they did honour and obey him as their Lord. Tho' Men perceive ſuch a Change, and ſee themſelves, and all the Creatures ſo filthy, corrupt and miſerable, yet they cannot ceaſe from loving them to the prejudice of the LOVE they owe their God. How then, I ſay, could Man have abſtained from placing his Affections thus perverſely, if he had continued as beautiful and perfect after his Fall, and all the other Creatures had retain'd their Perfections, and remain'd as lovely as they were before the Fall? There is Reaſon to believe, that neither *Adam*, nor any Man after him, would have remained or died in the Love of God, if he had recovered it after his Sin by the pure Mercy of God, without the Condition of doing Penitence; or without the Curſe which befel all the other Creatures in him. For we ſee that Men even love this Life now it is ſo miſerable; and the Creatures, tho' they are ſo wretched and miſchievous, that they are continually hurting one another, and killing and devouring one another; and tho' Man feels in himſelf Contradictions, Debates, Griefs, Diſpleaſures, Anguiſh, and all ſorts of vicious Paſſions which he cannot rule nor govern by the Conduct of Reaſon; yet his Mind is become ſo bruiſh, that

that he is in love with these Miseries, Defects and Imperfections, as if they were most perfect, and most lovely things, tho' he finds nothing in himself, or the other Creatures, but what deserves his Hatred and Contempt; nevertheless he loves them, values and esteems them, slighting the Love of his God, who knowing the *Degeneracy and Slothfulness of Man's Heart*, has enjoyn'd him Penitence as a necessary Means to withdraw his Affections from this miserable Life, that they may be turned towards his God, who desires to be alone loved by Man: And for this Reason has made all the Creatures which were subjected to Man, contract with him the Curse flowing from Sin, that by this means Man might be brought back to the LOVE OF HIS GOD, who is the only lovely Object.

§. 141. Nevertheless those blind Men do not understand these things, having never been able to comprehend them, because of the Dulness of their Understandings. They remain ignorant of the things which they see with their Eyes, touch with their Hands, and feel and experience in themselves. They have still so much Sense and Reason as to judge, that in this Life they are truly miserable, and that there is a great Corruption, Strife and Contradiction throughout all Nature; that not only the Beasts, but even Men devour one another; that the Water destroys the Fire, and the Fire burns every thing; that the Air infects, and is infested with Whirlwinds and Tempests; and the Earth brings forth Briars and poisonous Plants: in short, that all that Man sees and feels, has its Curse, which cannot proceed from a God infinitely and wholly Good, who will never do but what is Good, without any mixture of Evil: And whatever Man do, God will never change his Goodness. He still watches for Man's Good, tho he render himself his Enemy. He affords him Remedies for his Evil, even when he is not seeking for Help; God still prevents him with his Grace, and affords him Means to use that Grace aright. For when he saw Man turn away from the LOVE OF GOD, and set his Affections on Earthly Things, he made the Curse that followed upon Sin to overspread all Earthly Things, that Man finding them so accursed might not set his Affections on them, but turn them wholly towards God his Creator. And when God saw that Man had abused the Delights of the Earthly Paradise, and that he was desirous still to remain in it even after his Fall, tho' it had received already the Curse in him, he being yet desirous to live for ever, even after he was become so Miserable; God thrust him out of this Paradise of Delights, because by eating the Fruit

Fruit of a Tree which had the Vertue to preſerve Man's Life, he would have remained in a perpetual Penitence, his Life being preſerved by the Fruit of this Tree: this, God of his Goodneſs would not permit, being ſatisfied that Man ſhould accompliſh a ſhort time of Penitence, during which he might recover the LOVE OF GOD by his Tears and Sufferings.

§. 142. But Man's Mind being become brutiſh by Sin, which darkens the Soul, and confounds the Underſtanding, he thinks that he is chaſtiſed of God, when he obtains Favours and Graces from him; even ſuch as he has been pleas'd moſt graciouſly to beſtow on Men, after they had offended him, and fallen into the ſame Crime with *Adam*, turning away their Love from God, and placing it on themſelves, and a great many other different Objects; thus ſinking more and more, even inſenſibly, into a forgetfulneſs of their God, not knowing their Sins, nor perceiving how greatly they were eſtrang'd from him. Then God, out of his fatherly Care and Compaſſion, gave them Commandments, by which they might ſee and know their Sins, that they might amend them, and return unto the LOVE OF GOD: and therefore he ſays unto them in expreſs Words; (d) *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, with all thy Strength, and with all thy Mind*: that they might no longer be ignorant of this, that they were created to love God only; and therefore they ought not to place their Affections on any other thing, but on him alone: And all the other Commands directing what was to be done, and what to be avoided, had no other Aim but to diſcover the ſeveral Diſeaſes of their Hearts, and by what different Ways they were wounded with diverſe Sins. For this End God gave them by *Moſes* diverſe kinds of Laws, as ſo many different ſorts of Remedies for their Diſtempers; by which he might heal them, and bring them back to his LOVE: and indeed a great many did return to it by the means of the *Moſaical* Law.

§. 143. And ſeeing the Goodneſs of God is not bounded nor limited by the perverſeneſs of Men, he ſtill continued to impart his Graces to them. He therefore perceiving that they had perverted the Law of *Moſes*, and by a wrong Uſe of it departed farther from his LOVE; and that deſtroying it by their Works, while they made their boaſt of it, they had fallen into many Sins, beſides thoſe which they had committed

(d) *Luke* x. 27. *Deut.* x. 12.

before the Law; he again exerted his Mercy and Goodneſs by ſending them his *Goſpel-Law*, which is more perfect and compleat than that of *Moſes*. And that they might the more readily embrace and obey this Law, God ſent his well-beloved Son to teach and inculcate it to Men, even by his Life and Example; that they might not be ignorant of any of the things which they ought to do or avoid, for recovering the LOVE OF GOD; ſince without dying in this LOVE none can be ſaved, let him believe or hope what he will. *For all they who die out of the* LOVE OF GOD, *deſcend into Hell; becauſe they have rebelled againſt the purpoſe and* DESIGNS OF GOD, *who would have Men to love him only, that he might take his Delight with them.* And yet thoſe Men, deſpiſing the Grace and Pleaſure of God, will not love him, but chuſe rather to ſet their Love on ſome vile Creatures, (as they themſelves are,) than on a God ſo amiable, who loves them tenderly, and hath prepared for them great and eternal Treaſures, if they perſevere in his Love.

§. 144. Lo theſe are the Eſſential Truths for which the Clergy would kill me, or at leaſt hinder me from declaring them to the People. Therefore they have robb'd me of my Printed Writings which treat of this Subject, and will not reſtore them, but labour to have them deſtroyed: nay, ſome have cauſed them to be publickly burnt by the hand of the Hangman, affirming that they were Hereſies and Blaſphemies againſt God; and kept the People as much as they could from looking into them, leſt they ſhould underſtand the Truth: yea, they were not aſham'd to go from Houſe to Houſe to diſcredit thoſe great Truths of God; and they preach'd publickly againſt them, that they might give the People an abhorrence of them.

§. 145. By which it appears, dear Reader, that we are come to the laſt times, foretold by Jeſus Chriſt, of which he has given us this Sign, ſaying, (e) *When ye ſhall ſee the abomination of deſolation ſtand in the holy Place, then flee*; for the Plagues are at hand: And he brings this compariſon; *Now learn a Parable of the Fig-tree, when its Branch is yet tender, and putteth forth Leaves, ye know that Summer is nigh*: ſo you ought to conclude, that the laſt Judgment approaches, and that the end of the World is at hand; ſince we ſee now (in its complete Senſe) the Abomination of Deſolation ſtanding in the Sanctuary; for the Prieſts and Preachers who ſay they are Ambaſſadors from God, and ſtand in his ſtead, do

(e) *Matth.* xxiv. 15.

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nevertheleſs reſiſt his Truth, and perſiſt to teach the People Lies inſtead of it: This they Hate and Perſecute, becauſe it will not afford them the temporal Advantages of Honor and Profit, which they ſeem to have choſen for their God, and this World's delights for their Paradiſe. For if it were otherwiſe, they would liſten to that which I come to tell them in God's Name, and would receive his Truths, which are now ſo clear and convincing. But they not only turn a deaf Ear to the Truths of God, but labour alſo to ſuppreſs them, and to make them paſs for Lies, Errors and Blaſphemies againſt God: nay ſome of them have publiſh'd Books to diſcredit the Light that God is pleas'd to give me, and to render it odious to common People, who have no opportunity of knowing any other thing, but what thoſe blind Guides teach them. And to give Credit to their falſe Doctrine, they preach that the Truths of God and his Divine Lights are Hereſies: Tho' in truth I write nothing but that which God is pleas'd to teach and diſcover to me: and yet thoſe Prieſts and Preachers have cauſed ſome of theſe truly Spiritual Writings to be publickly burnt by the hand of the Hangman; affirming falſely, that they are Errors and Blaſphemies againſt God; tho' all Men of ſound Judgment, who are not wedded to a Party, may plainly ſee if they read them, that there are no Errors nor Blaſphemies in them; and that I teach nothing but what our Lord Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles taught.

§. 146. I proteſt before God and Men, that I aim at nothing in all my Words and Writings, but to *perſwade Men to return to the Love of God*; from which they have ſtrayed by the Comments, Explanations, or new Inventions of deceitful Men; who falſely promiſe Salvation to thoſe who live and die in their Self-love, and deſpiſe the practice of a Goſpel-Life: for ſuch ſhall never inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, while they contemn *the Deſigns of God, and the Graces and Means* which he affords them for their Recovery, and that they may be delivered from Eternal Damnation: and theſe conſiſt in the *Practice of the Goſpel-Law*; for conſidering the frailty of Men now adays, this only can lead to Salvation. For they ſhall never eſcape Eternal Damnation if they embrace not anew the Practice of this Goſpel-Law, which is the laſt and the moſt perfect of all the Laws, that God hath given, or will give to Men. Neither do I pretend to teach any other; or to ſpread Errors, as the Enemies of the truth of God give out; for God will never alter it, and Chriſt has brought it unto us *at the laſt Hour*. We muſt not look for any other, nor for new Prophets; for he hath foretold and taught all that

Men ought to do and avoid, even unto the End of the World.

§. 147. It is true indeed I ſpeak in my Writings of ſeveral things which are not expreſly ſet down in the Goſpel, but they are not ſuch, as every one is obliged to believe; or that the Belief of them is neceſſary to Salvation. I write them out of an abundance of the Divine Light, and to animate the Minds of thoſe who underſtand and reliſh them. But they who do not reliſh or apprehend them, may let them alone; I have neither Profit nor Loſs whether they believe theſe things or not; *I have obtain'd all my Aim, when I have made it appear, that none ſhall arrive at immortal Bliſs, but thoſe who will embrace the Practice of a Goſpel-Life*; as God hath reveal'd to me. I leave every one free to embrace it, if he will; for ſeeing God compels no Body, far leſs does it become me to conſtrain them. I have ſpoken more than once in my Writings, of the Creation of the World; of the glorious State in which *Adam* was made; how *Chriſt* was born of him in his State of Innocence; and of many other Divine Myſteries unknown to Men. But this is nothing but a cluſter of the Grapes of the Garden of Eternal Life; as the Spies ſent from the Children of *Iſrael* brought a Cluſter of Grapes from the Land of Promiſe, that thereby they might ſhew the Plenty and Fertility of it. Juſt ſo I have ſpoken of ſome high Myſteries which God hath been pleaſed to reveal to me, that I might thereby exhibit ſome little Pattern of the Glory which God hath prepared for thoſe who ſhall obſerve his Goſpel-Law. But I do not poſitively teach thoſe unknown Wonders as Articles of Faith, but I declare them only for animating my own Soul, and thoſe alſo who unfeignedly deſire to become true Chriſtians; to whom alſo I declare many things, which have not been publiſhed hitherto, becauſe the time of knowing ſuch things was not come: for we read in the ancient Prophets, that God ſaid to *Daniel*, (*f*) *Seal up theſe things till the latter times*; and the *Revelation* ſpeaks of *a cloſed Book, ſealed with ſeven Seals, which none could open but the Lamb that was Slain* (*g*). All theſe things, with many others, do make it evident, that God would hide from Men many ſecret and divine Myſteries, till the laſt times; for God has done nothing for Men, which he will not make known unto them, before the end of the World.

§. 148. And if I now declare unto them ſuch things as they have not formerly heard, they ought ſo much the rather to

(*f*) *Dan.* xii. 4. (*g*) *Rev.* v. 6.

weigh

weigh them, and to examine them narrowly, if they are true or profitable for the Salvation of Souls, without blindly rejecting or deſpiſing them, as Fools do, who condemn all that they do not underſtand, and revile thoſe who ſpeak to them for their Good. If thoſe Clergy Men did this thro' Ignorance, they would be in ſome manner excuſable; but it can be nothing but mere Perverſeneſs that makes them condemn the Eſſential Truths of the Goſpel, which I teach ſubſtantially in all my Writings; and adduce other things only by way of Compariſon, or that I may be the better underſtood; that thus Men, by various Means, may recover the LOVE OF GOD, which all have loſt; yea, and even his Fear too. And that in my Writings all may meet with diverſe Means ſuited to their Diſpoſitions; I ſpeak often of the Judgments of God, of his Rods and Chaſtiſements, which hang over our Heads; that they who are affected with Threatnings, and diſpos'd to turn to God by Fears and Terrors, may lay hold of thoſe Warnings concerning the laſt Judgment: but if others are drawn to God more by Promiſes, and by the Contemplation of that Glory which God has prepared for them after this Life, they may meditate ſeriouſly upon that celeſtial Happineſs, that by ſuch Conſiderations they may be enflam'd with the LOVE of a God ſo kind and bountiful to his Creatures. And if others are diſpoſed to return to God by diſcovering the Falſhoods and Errors which are now ſpread thro' the Chriſtian World, I ſpeak of them abundantly in my Writings. So that nothing is wanting for him that truly deſires to ſearch; ſuch an one ſhall aſſuredly find in the reading of thoſe Writings, the Means which are proper for him; for in them there is abundance of Helps for all ſorts of Diſpoſitions. But the Scope or Mark at which I aim in declaring ſo many of the Wonders of God, is only this, *viz.* to make it plainly appear to Men, that they cannot be ſaved but by recovering the Practice of a Goſpel-Life, ſuch as the Chriſtians led in the Primitive Church; for God is Yeſterday and to Day the ſame, and *Chriſt* the Divine Phyſician brought the laſt Remedies for our wounded Souls, by giving them the *Recipe* of his Goſpel-Law, which we muſt all take and ſwallow down even till the laſt Day of Judgment, if we deſire to be ſaved.

§. 149. And all thoſe who by Word or Writing affirm the contrary, are the Deceivers and Seducers of the latter Times, who have already ſeduced a great many, even well-meaning Perſons, by covering their Frauds with pious Pretences; as that of *Humility*, when they ſay, that *they are incapable of*

doing Good; and alſo *honoring Jeſus Chriſt*, in aſcribing to him *the Merits of their Salvation*. All this has a ſhew of Good, tho' in effect it is Evil; ſince it is a falſe Humility to ſay, that we can do no Good, when Chriſt has obtain'd of his Father *Grace for us to obſerve his Goſpel-Law*, and to regulate our Lives according to this Law. But Men cover their Sloth and their Unwillingneſs to do this, with a falſe Humility, which indeed is great Pride; while they ſay, that *Chriſt* has ſatisfied all for Men, and they themſelves will ſuffer nothing; as if Chriſt had wanted us; and with the Price of his Blood had bought Slaves and Criminals that he might employ them about any thing. Is not this a mighty Honor done him? Truly this is all one, as to ſay, that it would be a great Honor for a Prince to go and redeem ſome wicked Criminals, and to take them out of the Hands of the Executioner, who was ready to do Juſtice upon them, that he might keep them with himſelf in his own Palace, where they would Rob, Injure and Affront him; and commit many more Villanies, than they had done before he had redeem'd them, and for which they had been condemned to Die. This is what blind People ſay at this time that Jeſus Chriſt the Soveraign Prince has done for them. For ſome are ſo unreaſonable, as to ſay; *if God will take Men into his Paradiſe, he muſt certainly ſave us*: as if God could be honored by receiving into his heavenly Kingdom wicked and profligate Men, who do continually offend him. Nay one of theſe Preachers wrote to me, *that Men ought to live well, not that they may merit Salvation, but only out of Gratitude for what* Chriſt *has ſuffered for them.*

§. 150. Is there any Doctrine, friendly Reader, more abominable under a cloak of Piety, than this, which, I am told, the *Lutherans* preach publickly? Can they more highly deſpiſe the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, than to ſay, that Men do him Honor when they do any good, out of Gratitude and Acknowledgment of what he has done for them? Is not this to make Chriſt the Servant, and Man the Lord and Maſter? For a Maſter when he ſees his Servant ſerve faithfully, beſtows freely ſome Gift upon him, in acknowledgment of his good Service. And ſeeing the Scripture ſays, (g) that it *is more honourable to give than to receive*, it muſt follow, according to theſe Mens Gloſſes, that greater Honor is due to Man when he does ſomething in Acknowledgment and Gratitude for what Chriſt ſuffered for him, than to Chriſt, for having ſhed his Blood to redeem him. Verily if Mens Eyes were open to

(g) *Acts* xx. 35.

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diſcern the truth of things, they would wonder how it were poſſible that ſo much as one Man could become ſo ſtupid and void of Reaſon as to admit of ſuch Thoughts; which nevertheleſs ſome of the moſt knowing among the Reformed advance and maintain; and thus deceive the People, and ſuffer them to live in thoſe Errors. For God has no need of any Perſon, and if he will, he may create a hundred thouſand other Worlds, tho' this were deſtroyed, and all the Men that dwell in it thruſt into Hell. He can create Cherubims, and Seraphims, and many other kinds of Creatures which we cannot comprehend, and with them repleniſh his Paradiſe, after that ungrateful Men have render'd themſelves unworthy of it. He has no need of admitting there proud and wicked Men, who will perſiſt in their Vices, and yet oblige God to admit them into Paradiſe thro' the Merits and Sufferings of his Son Jeſus Chriſt.

§. 151. Does not ſuch Preſumption deſerve rather to be puniſhed by eternal Death, than to obtain Salvation thro' the Merits of Chriſt? Could God, who is ſo juſt and equitable, ſend his well-beloved Son to redeem wicked Profligates from eternal Damnation, who reſolutely perſevere in their wickedneſs, yea and ſtill advance in it? Is he not rather obliged (as a juſt Judge) to condemn thoſe wicked Men to the Fire, than to bring them into his Paradiſe by the Pains and Sorrows of his Son Jeſus Chriſt? ſeeing they deſpiſe him and his Doctrine, which is now become a greater Scandal to the Chriſtians, than it was heretofore to the *Jews*; for many more of the *Jews* did then embrace the Doctrine of the Goſpel than Chriſtians do now; the moſt part of whom are ſcandaliz'd at it, or look upon it as a Fiction or a Thing impoſſible to be done; becauſe the learned of this Age have perſwaded them of this by their frivolous Arguments, which have not the leaſt Foundation of Truth. For we have ſtill the ſame God, and we are the ſame kind of Creatures with thoſe who lived in the Primitive Church; who tho' they were weak and frail as we are, yet put in practice the Doctrine of the Goſpel, even while Men were yet Strangers to it, and the learned and wiſe of that Age ſuſpected it, and ſaid, *that Jeſus Chriſt was come to deſtroy the Law*: as indeed his Life and Doctrine did in ſeveral things contradict the Traditions of the Law; notwithſtanding great Numbers embrac'd it, and many chearfully ſhed their Blood for the Defence of this Doctrine of the Goſpel. But now when Chriſtians profeſs this Doctrine, and it is taught in the Churches as the unqueſtionable Truth of God, confirmed by

ſo many Miracles, and the Blood of the Martyrs; we meet with none who do in their Practice obey it.

§ 152. And becauſe I deſire to practiſe it, they perſecute me and ſeek to kill me, as a Seducer of the People; becauſe I have declared, *That there are not now any true Chriſtians on the Earth*; and that *he who will be a true Chriſtian muſt take up a Goſpel-Life*. They would perſwade ignorant People, that by this I vent Hereſies, and Blaſphemies againſt God, while I declare the Truths which he himſelf has communicated to me: they labor to quench his Light, that none may be enlightned by it, and that all may periſh in their Darkneſs, and none may be ſaved. By which it appears, that we are fallen into the *perilous Times* foretold by Jeſus Chriſt, *wherein many falſe Prophets do ariſe and do deceive many* (*h*). For as the *Jews deſtroyed the Law of God by their Traditions, and while they made their Boaſt of the Law, by their Deeds they deſtroyed the very ſame Law*: ‡ juſt ſo do the Chriſtians now adays, who by their Gloſſes and Traditions deſtroy the Goſpel-Law which God has given them by his Son Jeſus Chriſt; they have received it and own'd it to be Good, and by their Preaching declare it to be ſo, but yet they will not obey it; they profeſs to believe in *Chriſt* with *their Lips only, but their Hearts are very far from being inclin'd to follow him*. They are Chriſtians by Name, and Anti-chriſtian in their Manners; for they do altogether contrary to what Chriſt has taught them, and nevertheleſs they live at their Eaſe, as if they were in the way of Salvation, tho' really they are ruſhing on in the way of Perdition.

§. 153. There is no other Remedy for thoſe Evils, but to be renewed in the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, and to practiſe the mortification of corrupt Nature, crucifying this old *Adam*, that the new *Adam*, which is Jeſus Chriſt, may live in us. Lo this is the only Remedy which now remains in the World to bring us to Salvation. They who teach or ſpeak otherwiſe, are accurſed, as the Apoſtle ſays, (*i*) *If any one preach unto you any other Goſpel, than that which I have preached unto you, believe him not, tho' he were an Angel from Heaven*. And I ſay the ſame, dear Reader, to all thoſe who ſhall peruſe this Treatiſe *of the Renovation of the Goſpel-Spirit*: Let them lay it to Heart, and not hearken to any other Doctrine; ſince this only is the ſaving truth, without which all other things are nothing but amuſements, and loſs of time for thoſe who deſire to be ſaved: For God having created Men free, could not, be-

(h) *Mark* vii. 13. ‡ *Rom.* ii. 33. (*i*) *Gal.* i. 8.

cauſe

cauſe he would not, ſave them (who are ſunk in their Sins) by the Sufferings of Jeſus Chriſt, while they perſiſt in following their corrupt Nature, and ſtill eating of the forbidden Fruit, againſt the Will and Command of God; thus perſevering in the ſtate of Damnation, into which *Adam* had at firſt precipitated and thrown them: and from this Fall they can never recover, becauſe of their Frailty, unleſs they practiſe the Penitence which God hath annexed to the Pardon of Sin. For when *Adam*, who before his Fall, was ſo Holy and Perfect, did ſo eaſily fall from the Grace of God, by turning his Love to ſo many beautiful Creatures, how much more would every Man in particular have fal'n, had not God deprived them of all thoſe Beauties after they were altogether weakned by their Father's Fall, and had nothing of his Strength to reſiſt Temptation? They would have far more readily fallen, becauſe they had no longer that Communion with God which *Adam* had during his State of Innocence. It was neceſſary therefore that God, who deſired to ſave Man, ſhould enjoyn him a Life of Labour and Penitence, in order to preſerve him in his Duty. Even ſo it was needful that *Chriſt* ſhould teach Men to do Penitence that they might be ſaved, ſince otherwiſe he could not ſave them, nor force their Wills which God had left free, that every one might be ſav'd or damn'd according to his Choice. For though a thouſand Chriſts had, each of them, died a thouſand times, they could not ſave ſo much as one Soul againſt its Will; after God had once will'd to have all Souls free, either to abide in his Love, or to make Deſertion from it, without any conſtraint to Good or Evil, except that of their own Choice: for God never retracts what he has once done, and never belies nor deſerts any one of his Perfections, let Men do what they will. It pleaſed him to create Man a free Creature to love him, and this Liberty will abide with him to all Eternity.

§. 154. Moreover it is his Will always to do Good, and therefore he can never do Evil; He will always grant his Grace to Men, even to the Wicked alſo: And therefore none can truly ſay, that God denies him his Grace to do well, and to abide in his Love; but Man abuſes this Grace, and employs it to offend him, inſtead of improving it to Love him; and therefore it ſeems impoſſible to him to do Good, or to be able to keep the Goſpel-Law; tho' Chriſt himſelf ſays (*k*) *that his Yoke is eaſie, and his Burthen light*: But the rebellious Will of Man, being habitually enclin'd to Evil, finds it ve-

(*k*) *Matth.* xi. 30.

ry difficult to reſiſt this Evil. Nevertheleſs if the rational Soul had firmly reſolved to become truly Chriſtian, that by this means it might recover the Love of God, it would without doubt receive his Grace for the attainment of its End. But the unworthy Sloth of that Man, who deſires not to undergo Penitence, makes him to find out pretences, whereby to excuſe himſelf from it; tho' Chriſt has ſo plainly ſaid, *Unleſs ye repent (or do Penitence) ye ſhall all Periſh:* And inſtead of believing this Truth which cometh from the Mouth of Chriſt, and of following it, they invent Words to ſooth and flatter Men in their remiſneſs and ſelf Love; and perſwade them that *the truths of God have another meaning; and that it is not needful to take them literally in order to obſerve them: it ſuffices to Read them, as we do Hiſtories or Fables*; and they obtrude upon the People only counterfeited Truths and ſeeming Vertues. By which means all are led to Perdition, while they think to obtain Life and Salvation by continuing in their Self-Love, tho' after this manner no Man can be ſaved.

§. 155. I would not have you, friendly Reader, to wreſt my Words by ſubtle Criticiſms, as my Adverſaries do, who ſay *that I Blaſpheme, or deny the Omnipotence of God, when I ſay that he cannot do this or that:* for theſe are Terms I uſe, that I may be the better underſtood. Certainly God can do all that he pleaſes; and yet he can never do any Evil; but this comes not from any Impotency, as thoſe Criticks would have it thought that I Blaſpheme by my Words; for there is no need of Power to do ill, ſince Evil is nothing but an impotency to do Good. But thoſe Interpreters fix on Terms and Words, and neglect the ſubſtance of the Matter. I deſire only to ſhew the neceſſity of LOVING GOD, and of dying in his Love, in order to attain immortal Life. And while I labour to inculcate this, they will needs cavil at my Words and Expreſſions, which I ſimply uſe to ſignify the ſubſtance of the thing I would declare. For I ſtudy not to write well, nor am I ſollicitous about the Terms in which I declare the Truths of God. It is enough to me that I expreſs the ſubſtance of them, ſo as that I may be underſtood, without asking Men firſt what ſort of Terms would be moſt agreeable to them. I leave this to thoſe who ſeek to pleaſe them, for I deſire to pleaſe God only. I ſometimes name *Peter* for *Paul*, or one Country for another, and I am not careful to amend ſuch Faults; for I know that ſimple Sincerity is more pleaſing to God, than the Eloquence of all the learned in the World, who value themſelves for ſpeaking well, that they may have Praiſe one of another; but I do not amuſe my ſelf

with

with ſuch things, neither do I regard any of their Cenſures. I hearken to God, and declare what he is pleaſed to tell me, in my plain Language; if this does not pleaſe ſome, they may leave it for them who will be pleaſed with it; for I have no mind to change it to pleaſe ignorant Men, who deſpiſe what they ought moſt to value, and commend in themſelves what they ought greatly to blame; namely, that they have nothing but fine Words, natural Truths and counterfeit Vertues; and all cover'd with a Mask of Charity, tho' in effect they deny the Eſſence of it, which is the LOVE of GOD: Upon which alſo they have put ſuch Gloſſes, that every one thinks he loves God, while he loves himſelf only.

§. 156. Now this is to live in continual Sin; for ſo long as a Soul is poſſeſs'd with the Love of it ſelf, or of any other thing but God, it is without his Grace, and rejects the End for which it was created, which was, (l) *To love God alone with all its ſtrength, and with all its heart, and with all its mind.* By which it is very plain, that a Man lives in Sin ſo long as he lives without this LOVE, and he ought not to perſwade himſelf that he loves God, while he loves any other thing; ſince *the LOVE of GOD* will not admit of any Rival; it requires the whole Heart entirely, without which it cannot be perfect; but is only a lukewarm Love, which is incompatible with the Love of GOD, which can have no Equal, with which it may reſide in the ſame Soul. All the Affection which a Man entertains for himſelf, or for any other Creature, baniſhes the LOVE of GOD out of his Soul, which cannot abide there ſo long as he loves any other thing: No more than Fire can abide in Water, ſince they are Two Contraries, which do ſtill expel one another. Yea there is a far greater Antipathy between the LOVE OF GOD and the Love of the Creature, than there is between theſe Two Elements of Fire and Water. And therefore a Man ought not to deceive himſelf by believing that he loves God, while he places his Affections on any other thing beſides God. For this is a vain and deceitful Perſwaſion, which the Holy Scripture confirms, when it ſays, (m) *Where your Treaſure is, there will your Heart be alſo.*

§. 157. Perhaps they will tell me, that a Man muſt love himſelf for Self-Preſervation, and that he muſt uſe the other Creatures for Neceſſity, which I readily grant. But there is a great Difference between *Uſing* and *Loving*. God has

(l) *Mark* xii. 30. (m) *Matth.* vi. 21.

grant;

granted Life to Man, and it ought to be preſerved. He has alſo created a great many Creatures for the Suſtentation and Neceſſity of Man; but he thought fit to reſerve Man's Heart and all his Affections entirely for himſelf alone. Wherefore it is lawful to uſe all thoſe things, but not to cleave to them by Love; becauſe God hath reſerved the Love of the Heart wholly for himſelf. And as he gave free Liberty to *Adam* to eat of all the Fruits of the Earthly Paradiſe, except of one Tree only, of which he might not eat; ſo alſo Man is permitted to uſe Meat, Drink, Apparel, the Earth, and all other things neceſſary for Life; but it is not permitted him to ſet his Heart upon them, or to turn his Love and Affections to them. For this is the Fruit of the forbidden Tree, becauſe Man cannot love any thing, but to the Prejudice of the LOVE he owes to his God.

§. 158. I know that Mens Hearts deceive them in this Matter alſo; for many ſay, and are perſwaded, that they love God, and do not conſider what the Scripture ſays, *viz. That the Heart is deceitful above all things* (n). They think they love God, when they only imagine it; and in effect there is nothing from which their Hearts are more eſtranged than from the LOVE of GOD; for they are full of all kinds of Earthly Loves. Some ſet their Hearts on their Riches; others, on pleaſing their ſenſual Appetites; others, on Luxury, Gluttony, and other kinds of Excels; and yet they have the Impudence to ſay, that they love God; as if they intended to deceive God, as they do Men. But this they cannot do, for God does not regard the outward Appearance of Things, nor ſpecious Words, or fine Speculations; but *He tries the heart, and ſearches the reins*; and perceives the very leaſt Motions of the Thoughts and Affections of Men. And the Apoſtle gives us a ſure Mark whereby we may diſcover this our ſelves, when he ſays, (o) *If you are riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above, and not thoſe things which are upon the Earth.*

§. 159. Now conſider, Friendly Reader, if you know many Perſons who don't any more ſeek the things that are upon Earth: Don't you rather obſerve, that every one is eager in ſeeking after Money, Honors, Places and Dignities, ſenſual Delights, and Pleaſures, and Accommodations in this World, and that in Emulation of one another? For every body ſtrives to have more of theſe, eſteeming himſelf happy in poſſeſſing them, and very miſerable when deprived of

(n) *Jer.* xvii. 9. (o) *Col.* iii. 1, 2.

them.

them. And nevertheleſs they call themſelves Chriſtians, and thoſe that have the LOVE of GOD in them: And they are highly diſpleaſed with any that would let them ſee the Truth of their deplorable Condition: For they deſire to be commended, and to be eſteem'd good and vertuous Perſons, while they ſtudy continually to gratifie their corrupt Nature, affording it all that it deſires of Meat, Drink and Apparel, with as many other ſenſual Pleaſures as it can conveniently have; believing, that eternal Bliſs ſhall be thrown into the Bargain, without their ſeeking for it; and that God is obliged to do this thro' the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt.

§. 160. Is not this a fine Conſtraint, that Man will oblige God to ſave him after this manner, when God has granted to Man Liberty to ſave or damn himſelf? Thus Man does not yield ſo much to God, as God does to Man, while he will have God to ſave him after another manner than he has determined; and will not perform that which God has appointed him to do in order to Salvation. This is a Preſumption worſe than that of the Devils, who deſired to be equal with God, whereas ſuch do prefer themſelves before him, deſiring that he would ſave them by the Merits and Sufferings of another; and in the mean time they themſelves will not ſeek after Holineſs, nor ſubmit to thoſe Laws which God hath given them, as means of Sanctification and Holineſs. All this they deſpiſe, and profeſs that they will be ſaved by the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, without believing in him, and far leſs imitating him. For Jeſus Chriſt ſays, (p) *He that believes in me doth the works that I do:* And elſewhere he ſays, (q) *If ye have faith as a Grain of muſtard-ſeed, ye ſhall remove mountains*, to ſhew that Faith is known by Works.

§. 161. But theſe nominal Chriſtians may cancel and croſs out all the Scriptures, ſeeing they will not any more believe them. They have wreſted them to their own Tempers, and found out Interpreters ſuitable to the looſeneſs of their Manners. So that all Chriſtendom is now become the *great Whore*, having violated her Faith to her Husband Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe Doctrine is the only true Church, the Spouſe of God. And as there is but one only God, there is alſo but one true Faith, and one true Church. Which only true Church and Spouſe of God is not eaſie to be found among ſuch a confuſed Variety of different Churches and Religions as we ſee at this time; and there God cannot be: For he ſays, That his Spouſe is one, and that ſhe is his only Dove;

(p) *Joh.* xiv. 12. (q) *Matth.* xvii. 20.

who,

who, like unto the Turtle, ought to mourn for having loſt her Mate, inſtead of joyning her ſelf, after the Death of her Husband, with ſo many wild Ravens or Beaſts of Prey, who have devoured the Souls of the true Chriſtians, of the Prophets and Apoſtles, whom they killed, and would yet devour them, if they could have them. For all thoſe different Sects and Religions deſire to take away my Life, becauſe I diſcover their Errors, and declare, that the Goſpel-Law is the only ſaving Religion. Do you think, Friendly Reader, that for this I have deſerved to be put to Death? Were it not far better for all thoſe divided Sects and Religions to unite together in owning ſo firm a Truth; namely, that out of the true Church there is no Salvation; and that they would all joyn in this Truth, that they may embrace the true Doctrine of the Goſpel, and put it in Practice; ſtriving with a holy Emulation to excel in it, rather than to vex and perſecute a poor Virgin, who is the Spouſe of the Holy Spirit? Have not I reaſon to ask, as the Voice did St. *Paul*, when going to *Damaſcus*, *Paul, Paul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* So in like manner to ask all thoſe Clergymen, Why perſecute ye me, ſeeing I neither do, nor ſpeak Evil to any?

§. 162. I only declare the Truths which God hath communicated to me, and I proclaim, as joyful News, *That God will once again renew his Goſpel-Spirit upon Earth, and will fill well-meaning Souls with the Spirit that Jeſus Chriſt had while he was upon Earth; and that the Chriſtians of the laſt Age ſhall live in greater Perfection, than they of old did in the Primitive Church.* This would certainly be very acceptable to all Men living, if the Devil had not infatuated their Minds, to make them reſiſt the Truth, and their own eternal Happineſs; and to be more in love with a Bubble of Honor, a little Worldly Gain, or Momentary Pleaſures, than with the endleſs Happineſs of the Life to come. O perverſe and wretched Age! wherein even the Well-meaning are deceived, and they who ought to love the Truth of God, do deſpiſe, reproach and perſecute it, and would put them to Death, who declare it to be good and ſalutary; while theſe Enemies of the Truth ſay, *They are Errors and Blaſphemies againſt God*; and charge me with the very ſame Evils which I may truly ſay of them. For the Guides of Souls do now teach them Errors for Truths, and other Blaſphemies againſt God, in that they would oblige him to beſtow his Paradiſe upon wicked Men, who chuſe to live and die in their Sins and Wickedneſs; yea, and make God the Author of Damnation, and the Upholder of Sin, in that they will have him to ſave them, even while they con-

continue to cleave to their Sins, and will not forſake them, nor turn from them unto God. Whereas God aſſures me, that none ſhall be ſaved, but they who will obſerve the Goſpel-Law. And becauſe I ſpeak the ſame Truths which Chriſt and his Apoſtles declared, theſe Clergy Men would kill me, becauſe this Doctrine does not bring in Money to make the Pot to boil. For what elſe could move them to this? Since I teach no other thing, but what Jeſus Chriſt taught and did; and they profeſs to be Chriſtians, and to teach the ſame Goſpel that I teach. For I bring no new Goſpel, but only ſhew, that the Goſpel of Chriſt and his Apoſtles ought to be obſerved and put in Practice. And this is ſo true, that not ſo much as one Soul will ever be ſaved, but they who obey it, as I have ſaid. The Preachers may wreſt and explain the Scriptures as they will; but they ſhall never be able to alter this Truth, which God hath expreſly declared unto me.

§. 163. This has moved me to publiſh the Practice of *the Renovation of the Goſpel-Spirit*; wherein I give a particular Deduction of every thing to my Children, that they may know how they ought to practiſe it, leaving all thoſe who will not take this way, to Periſh; for they are free to damn themſelves, if they will. I have not publiſhed this Treatiſe for ſuch, but for thoſe ſincere Souls only, who deſire to be *Converted, and to become little Children; for theirs ſhall be the Kingdom of Heaven* (r). Such are dear to me, and I will lead them the ſame way, in which God leads me; for there is no other way that leads to Salvation. You will perhaps wonder, friendly Reader, that intending to ſhew the practice of a Goſpel-Life, I ſhould enlarge ſo much upon the Looſneſs, the Corruptions and Errors of the Chriſtians of this preſent Age; and eſpecially upon the way and conduct of the Clergy. But, believe me, this was very needful. *For all thoſe who are prepoſſeſs'd with the School-Doctrines and Errors of this Age, are incapable of receiving the Truths of the Goſpel; and much more of Practiſing them:* for they will ſtill perſwade themſelves that they do well, and are good Chriſtians, whilſt they follow the Opinions of thoſe they account ſo knowing and learned; and therefore they cannot embrace a Goſpel-Simplicity. There is therefore a neceſſity of ceaſing from Evil, before one can do well: And if Men do not diſcover the Falſhoods and Deceits of the modern Divines, they will ſtill take Good for Evil, and Lies for the Truth. But he

(r) *Matth.* xviii. 3.

who

who can make a right Judgment of those things, will not suffer himself to be led by the Nose, by the Sophistry of Men; but will embrace the Gospel-Truth that he may obtain eternal Happiness. I resolv'd therefore first of all to represent the Errors and Lies which have now overspread Christendom, that none may deceive themselves by thinking they are in the way of Salvation, because they are of some particular Sect or Religion, or have embrac'd some Opinions that are probably better than others: seeing none of these things will avail for the Salvation of Souls. Let them believe what they will, and call themselves Christians, or by any other Name they please; yet none shall be saved but they who put in practise the Gospel-Law, which is the only Law that leads to Salvation, and the last that is to be look'd for.

§. 164. And tho' the Lives of Men now at this time are greatly estranged from it; yet it shall never cease to be true, that God will not receive any into his Kingdom, but those who are cloathed with the Spirit of Jesus Christ; having renounced the Spirit of corrupt Nature. This may be easily comprehended even by human Reason, if we but duly consider these few Positions of undoubted Truth; *viz. That God created Man to be loved by him, and for no other end: that he made him a Creature wholly perfect and glorious; giving him dominion over all terrestial Creatures: that he created him altogether free, as a little God: But that Sin breaking in upon this beautiful Master-piece of the Works of God, made Man so miserable, so infirm, ignorant and weak, that all the things over which he ought to bear Rule, enslave and oppress him.* And indeed it is acknowledged by all Christians, *that Men are now born Children of Wrath and Perdition; and therefore are by Nature in a damnable State.* And *that the Grace of God only can save and deliver them from this Damnation, into which they have wilfully thrown themselves:* Now *this Grace was obtain'd by Christ for all those who shall willingly embrace his Gospel-Law, and for none other.* 'Tis upon all these true Foundations that every one's Salvation must be built, and not upon the Sandy Inventions of Men; who say, *that in order to be saved one must be of this or t'other Religion; and must believe this or that Article; he must embrace such an Opinion; or apply to himself the Merits of Christ; and go to Church, and read the Scriptures; and use a great many other means of Salvation;* which they inculcate to the People to lull them asleep in their Sins, as Children use to be put to Sleep by singing a Song to them. For many will find themselves greatly deceived by all this at Death; and will feel great Anguish when they awake out of their Stupidity,

and

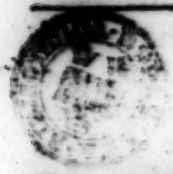
and ſee the wretched State in which they are, for having amuſed themſelves with thoſe Trifles which cannot ſave them: for all thoſe Buildings made with Mens Hands ſhall Periſh, and nothing ſhall abide but the true and ſaving Foundations; namely, *That Man was created only to Love God*; And *that if he Die out of this Love, he cannot be ſaved*: Moreover, *that Sin damned Man without any Remiſſion*; And *that therefore he can never be ſaved but thro' the Merits and Interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, which will never be applied to any but his Diſciples*; that is, *to thoſe who imitate and follow him.* And hence we may eaſily conclude, *That none ſhall be ſaved, but they who ſhall take up the Goſpel-Spirit.*

165. Let them be deceived who will: but, friendly Reader, I beſeech you to take this Treatiſe to Heart. Chuſe with *Mary the better part which ſhall not be taken from you.* It were better for you not to have known the Truth, than after you have known it, to deſpiſe or neglect it, ſeeing it is ſaid, (*ſ*) *He that knew the Father's Will, and did it not, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes.* Watch for your Salvation. The time of this Life is very ſhort, and will never return again. Do not neglect it then, for any little intereſt, any vain and empty Pleaſure or Satisfaction whatſoever; for it is better to ſuffer with God's Children, than to rejoice with the Children of the World, who periſh and their Luſts together. Secure your Soul from the Perils of this Life, which are ſo many, that one can hardly eſcape them. Mind not the Doctrines of Men: Cleave to that of Jeſus Chriſt only; for all others are infected with a ſpiritual and deadly Poiſon. *Return, O Shulamite* (*t*), *return* unto the riſing Church; for it only is the ſaving one. Let nothing ſtop you in this your Race. Forſake rather, according to the Advice in the Goſpel (*u*), *Father, Mother, Wife, Children, and all things*; if they hinder you from living in the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt (*x*). *What will it profit a Man, tho' he gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul?* Life Eternal deſerves well that you do a little Violence to your ſelf for it: For it is written, (*y*) *the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffers Violence, and the Violent take it by force.* Read and Peruſe this Treatiſe. It is a Manna come down from Heaven, to nouriſh your Soul, and to diſpoſe it for Eternal Life. This is what I heartily wiſh you, friendly Reader, and remain,

Your very Affectionate in Jeſus Chriſt,

ANTONIA BOURIGNON.

(*ſ*) *Luke* xii. 47. (*t*) *Cant.* vi. 13. (*u*) *Luke* xiv. 26, 33. (*x*) *Mark* viii. 36. (*y*) *Matth.* xi. 12.



A Preliminary

INTRODUCTION

TO

The Children of GOD:

[In which are contain'd the great and fundamental Truths of the Chriſtian Religion, concerning the *All* of God, the *Nothing* of Man; Man's Liberty, his End, his Corruption, and his Renovation.]

Dear Children,

§. 1. I Have propos'd to let you ſee in this preſent Treatiſe, the State of a true Chriſtian; namely, what he ought to believe, what he ought to ſpeak and deſire; and chiefly what he ought to practiſe, that he may become a true Diſciple of *Jeſus Chriſt*: becauſe all thoſe things are ſo neceſſary at this time, that (*a*) without knowing and doing them there is no Salvation to be hoped for. Therefore I ſay and (*b*) repeat the ſame things in different Terms and in diverſe Manners, that I may the better inculcate them into the Hearts and Minds of all thoſe that deſire to arrive at a bleſſed Eternity. And indeed I find my ſelf oblig'd to declare unto you theſe Chriſtian Truths, ſeeing there are ſo many well-meaning Perſons that Periſh, (*c*) for want of knowing or comprehending aright what a true Chriſtian ought to do: for oftentimes (*d*) they who ſay they have Faith, are baptiz'd and do bear the

(a) *Pſal.* cxix. 155. (b) *Phil.* iii. 1. (c) *Hoſ.* iii. 6. (d) *Tit.* i. 16.

Name

Name of Christians, are indeed Anti-Christians, being directly contrary in their Lives, Manners, and Actions, to the Doctrine and Life of *Jesus Christ*, who alone is the Model of a true Christian: the (e) *only Way* and the *only saving Truth*, out of which we can never arrive at Salvation.

§. 2. But before I enter upon the deduction of those things, I have thought fit to shew you a Letter which I've written to a Person who reckon'd himself of the number of true Christians, or of those who think themselves vertuous or regenerate Persons; that by this Letter writ to a Friend you may see the deceitfulness of Man's Heart; and how his Fancy (f) or Imagination hath been corrupted by Sin, that his Justice (g) and his Vertue are things meerly imaginary or fantastical, by which he deceiveth both himself and others. But this ye cannot comprehend, *dear Children of God*, if you don't see in the Practice the particular Deportment and Actions of this Person, who was accounted most Virtuous by Men, as he himself also believ'd that he was. But being come to dwell with me, I presently discovered the Cheat, and that which was lodg'd in the bottom of his Soul; namely, a great Esteem of himself, believing that he merited all, because of the Virtue which he thought he had, fancying that all Men were oblig'd to serve and honor him for his Vertue, which in his own Account seemed to deserve all the finest and best Things that he could have for his Use; even as all others do (as well as he) who think they are in a State of Regeneration, and are not so indeed.

§. 3. For what (h) Relation can there be between the Actions of such a Person and those of *Jesus Christ*, (who hath said to the Regenerated and to all Christians, (i) *be ye followers of me*) seeing *Jesus Christ* practis'd the quite contrary, in despising himself, and not thinking that he merited any thing: Yea even as to necessary Things, *Jesus Christ* chused always the least and meanest, and said (k), (speaking of himself) *I am a Worm and no Man, nay, a Reproach of Men.* Again, instead of making himself to be served and honored, he saith expresly, (l) *I am not come to be Ministred unto, but to Minister: and to give my Life a Ransom for many.* (m) Which likewise all those who call themselves Regenerate ought to do according to his Example, by practising the lowliness of *Jesus Christ*, instead of being puff'd up with Pride, and of esteem-

(e) *Jo.* xiv. 6. (f) *Gen.* viii. 21. (g) *Prov.* xvi. 25. (h) 2 *Cor.* vi. 14. (i) *Jo.* xxi. 19. (k) *Psal.* xxii. 6. (l) *Matth.* xx. 28. (m) *Phil.* ii. 5.

ing themſelves becauſe of their Virtues. They ought (n) *to chuſe the loweſt Place*, according to their Maſter's Counſel, and to take the leaſt things for their Uſe, accounting themſelves unworthy of having even what is preciſely neceſſary, if their Heart did not exceedingly deceive them.

§. 4. But becauſe they know not this deceitfulneſs of their own Hearts, they think all goes well with their Souls, (o) and that they are already regenerated when they have but the deſire of being ſo. There be many in this belief amongſt the *Children of God*, to whom I addreſs this *Introduction*, together with the above-nam'd Letter, (writ to one that did not know the Craftineſs of his own Heart) to the end that they may become Wiſe through the Faults of another, and not ſuffer themſelves to be cheated any more by their own Thoughts, believing they are come to the Chriſtian Perfection which they have not (p), for there be very few Perſons alive in the World who fully know the deceitfulneſs of their own Hearts, or the Perverſeneſs and Ignorance of their corrupt Nature; which indeed is ſo overloaded with Vices and Imperfections, that it cannot entirely diſcover them without a very ſingular Light from God, which may let it ſee the inward and hidden Things that are lodg'd in the Ground of the Heart: Since without this Divine Light Man committeth all ſorts of Evils, even when he thinks he doth all well: becauſe from *corrupt Nature* (q) no good can ever come; which is a thing that Men do not know, becauſe of the deceitfulneſs of their own Hearts.

§. 5. Therefore I would ſhew the Children of God the *Corruption of their Nature*, before I teach them the *Practice of the Evangelical Life*, which they can never embrace before they truly know the Corruption which Sin hath brought into Man: For if one does not diſcover that he's certainly living in a State of Damnation, he will not ſeek after the Means of his Salvation: And if Man thinks not that he ſhall be damned in following the Motions of his *Corrupt Nature*, he will never undertake an *Evangelical Life*, which is entirely oppoſite to Corrupt Nature, (r) and contradicts it in every thing. So that Man can never follow the Evangelical Counſels, if he does not know before hand the dangerous and miſerable State in which he is with regard to his Salvation. And therefore I was willing to let *them* ſee by this firſt Letter, the Ignorance, Weakneſs and Perverſeneſs of Man's Spirit,

(n) *Luke* xiv. 8, 10. (o) *Rev.* iii. 17. (p) *Jer.* xvii. 9, 10. (q) *Prov.* xvi. 25. (r) *Gal.* v. 17.

and

and the Deceitfulneſs of his Heart, by the particular Actions of this Perſon who thought himſelf Regenerate; which will ſerve as a Looking-glaſs to thoſe that will be at pains to behold themſelves in it: for many are in the ſame State before God without knowing it, thinking in the mean time that they are arrived at a higher Degree of Virtue than ordinary. So that thoſe Perſons have more need to know how much they are corrupted, and enclin'd to do Evil, and Enemies of all Good, than to hear all the Particulars of an Evangelical Life, ſeeing they can't practiſe this before they know their Corruption. For he who ſees not clearly that all he doth is Evil, and that no good can come of his *Corrupt Nature*, is never likely to deny his own Will: for the natural Man eſteems nothing ſo much, and accounteth nothing ſo dear to him as to follow his natural Inclinations and his own Will; which things he cannot reſiſt until he hath diſcover'd that they lead him to Perdition. For Corrupt Nature has this property in it, that it loves more to do ill in following its own Will, than to do good in following the Will of *God*. So much is it in love with its ſelf, that it Studies more to cover and excuſe its Faults, than it endeavours to correct them, becauſe of the bent and inclination it hath to follow its own Motions. So that if it thought it could be ſaved in following its own Will, it would gladly contemn the Counſels of *Jeſus Chriſt* that it may follow its own Sentiments, and would never think on denying it ſelf. But ſince that cannot be, and that none ſhall enter into Paradiſe but Regenerated Perſons, who have contradicted and ſubdued their Corruption, it is eaſy to conclude from this, that all who follow the Motions of their corrupt Natures ſhall be damn'd: for being born in a State of Damnation, and having lived and died in it, they ſhall to all Eternity be deprived of God, the Fountain of all Good; and confin'd in their own Corruption, the Source of all Evil.

§. 6. Some it may be will admire, that being about to treat of the *Renovation of the Goſpel-Spirit*, I ſhould inſiſt ſo much upon the Corruption of the Humane Nature. But this is no leſs neceſſary than Bread is to nouriſh the Body; Since Man is ignorant of his Corruption, and cannot become Chriſtian, until he hath ſurmounted and overcome this old Corruption, into which Men are fal'n in *Adam*: And therefore none that are deſcended of his Poſterity, can revive to the Spirit of *Jeſus Chriſt*, without having firſt killed this old Man, which hath covered the Bodies of all Men with this univerſal Leproſy, and has not left ſo much as the leaſt Hair, or the leaſt part of all their Members without bedawbing them inwardly and out-

outwardly with this mortal Leproſy. And the greateſt Evil of all is, that Men know not this their Malady. They think themſelves ſound and whole, even in the ſtrongeſt fit of this mortal Illneſs: for this Lethargy is oft-times inſenſible to them, making them Sleep the Sleep of Death. For this Reaſon, a very violent Stroke is neceſſary to rouſe them out of ſo deep a Sleep, without which Men will periſh Eternally.

§. 7. For I don't yet know any Perſon upon Earth who truly knows his own Corruption. Every one thinks he is wiſe enough in himſelf, and does well, even then when he ſpoils all: ſo much doth his own Heart deceive and abuſe him. 'Tis of our time that God ſaid by his Prophet (*f*), *God look'd from Heaven upon the Earth, ---- and ſaw none that did good*; repeating, *No not ſo much as one.* I have alſo had the ſame View according to the Light which God gives me, and I can truly ſay, that I have not yet found one that did good; for (*t*) *all Men have corrupted their Ways*, walking with Heat and Violence according to the Motions of their Corrupt Nature, out of which no good can ever come; no more than any good Liquor can come from a Leproſy or putrified Ulcer of a humane Body; all therein being ſtinking and infectious. And juſt ſo corruptible and hurtful to the Salvation of Souls, is every thing that proceedeth from the Motions of *Corrupt Nature.* I have often obſerv'd in well-meaning Perſons, that after they had ſeen their Faults, and were willing to amend them, they fell yet into greater; ſo that their laſt Sins were worſe than the firſt. Which cannot be otherwiſe, ſeeing that Man's Corruption increaſes proportionably to the Faults and Sins he committeth: and when he thinks to mend his Faults and to do good thro' the Motions of his Corrupt Nature, he falls into Preſumption of Spirit, aſcribing to his Corruption, the Power of doing well, tho' it hath no Power but to do Evil; which is an Impotency or defect.

§. 8. So that Man may Toil and Labor to amend his Life, or to embrace the Evangelical Spirit as he pleaſes. He can never come at it, if firſt of all he hath not wholly renounced the Corruption of his own Nature, and entirely ſubmitted himſelf to the Will and Government of God, who then will work in him all ſorts of Good, in oppoſition to all kinds of Evil. Behold this is the true and only means of embracing an Evangelical Life, of which it were abſolutely in vain for me to ſpeak to any of thoſe who are not effectually reſolv'd to renounce their corrupt Nature, ſince all my Admonitions

(*f*) *Pſal.* xiv. 2, 3. (*t*) *Luke* xvii. 26. *Gen.* vi. 12.

and

and Inſtructions could profit them nothing, without their labouring in the firſt place to mortifie their Corruption: For (as the Scripture ſpeaks) (p) *They muſt depart from Evil, and do Good.*

§. 9. Therefore I'm reſolved to deduce entirely the State of Man, as he is corrupted, before I treat fully of the State of a truly Chriſtian Soul; or of the State to which God calls Men in theſe laſt Times, wherein he ſeeks to renew his Goſpel-Spirit in the Souls of all them who are willing to prepare themſelves for receiving it. For we muſt not imagine, that God is partial, or that he will ſhew this Favour only to ſome few particular Perſons, ſince he is willing to communicate it to all thoſe who ſhall deny themſelves, and to none beſides; as theſe poor Predeſtinatians would give out, affirming, that *God hath choſen ſome, and rejected others.*

§. 10. Which indeed is contrary to the Deſigns which God had in creating Man: For ſince he was pleaſed to form a Creature altogether free and perfect, with which he would (q) take his Delights, he could not then confine or limit the Will of Man, whom he intended to make according to his own Likeneſs, to be (r) his Spouſe, and not his Slave conſtrain'd to do his Will: All other Sorts were abſolutely ſubmitted to his Will, but Man alone was created (s) altogether FREE, as a little God; ſupreme Lord and Governor over all the Creatures, which God had ſubjected to Man, leaving him free to uſe them well or ill, according to his Pleaſure. So that if Man had been willing to abide in the Love of his God, he might do it: But if he would needs depart from his Love, he might alſo do it in like manner, ſeeing he was perfectly free.

§. 11. And as God hath given this [Principle of] *Liberty* to Man when he created him, ſo he will never take it away from him, ſeeing his Deſigns are unchangeable, and all his Works eternal. He was pleaſed to make Man a perfectly free Creature, according to his Image, and in his Likeneſs; which the Scripture confirms, ſaying, (t) *You are Gods, to whom the Word of God is come.* And hence it comes, that there remains infallibly a bleſſed or a miſerable Eternity for Man, ſince Man is a Work of God, which muſt remain eternally, having been made by an eternal God. If this were not true,

(p) *Pſal.* xxxiv. 15. (q) *Prov.* viii. 31. (r) *Cant.* iv. 10. (s) *Eccleſ.* xv. 14, &c. *Deut.* xxx. 19, 20. *Joſ.* xxiv. 15. (t) Pſal. lxxxii. 6.

Hell could not be ſaid to be eternal, ſince (*u*) God could not have made any Evil, and will never make any; he having always done, and will always do Good, and never Evil: Though the Scripture ſays, (*w*) that *Good and Evil come from God*; the Meaning is not, that God doth Ill, but Man only doth Ill in (*x*) uſing this Liberty to do Evil. And indeed we may truly ſay, That this Liberty comes from God, but not the Abuſe of it. Juſt as a good Tradeſman makes a ſharp and well-temper'd Knife for the Uſe and Conveniency of any one that employs him; but if the Perſon abuſe this Knife to any bad Purpoſe, or kill his Brother with it, we can't ſay, in truth, that this Murther was committed by the Tradeſman, though the Inſtrument with which it was committed cometh from him. Even ſo we can't ſay, without Blaſphemy, that God hath done any Evil, ſince he gave to Man his full Liberty to do Good, and to LOVE him (*y*) VOLUNTARILY; for his God created him for this ONLY END.

§. 12. But if Man abuſe the Eternity and Liberty which God hath given him, yet he muſt remain eternal, and always free, becauſe God thought fit to have him only of this Nature, and not a kind of Creature either conſtrain'd or limitted to Time, as ſome ignorant People would imagine, that Hell ſhall not be eternal, but that the Damned ſhall yet return into the Favour of God, after having ſuffered a while in Hell. Which is invented to flatter the Wicked, who are not willing to continue in the *Love* of God, and yet would fooliſhly hope to recover his Grace after ſome time of Penitence. But they will certainly find themſelves deceived in this Matter; for there's no other Time of Remiſſion, but this ſhort Life, which is the Seaſon that God hath given to Man to prove himſelf in, and to ſee whether he will voluntarily perſiſt in the LOVE OF HIS GOD, or if he will carry his Affections towards himſelf or any other thing than *God*: But as ſoon as this time of Proof is over, there's no more Grace to be hoped for. Man muſt neceſſarily continue in the State he hath choſen in this World, and that to all Eternity. If then he hath overcome his Corruption, and given up to God the Free-will which He had given him, to let himſelf be entirely govern'd by his Divine Wiſdom, he hath purchaſed an eternally happy Life, which ſhall never end, he enters into *the Deſigns which God had in*

(u) *Wiſd.* i. 13. (w) *Lam.* iii. 38. (x) 4 *Eſdr.* viii. 57. (y) *Prov.* xxiii. 26.

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creating Man, namely, that he might take his Delights with him, being inſeparably and for ever united with his God in eternal and everlaſting Joys. But whoſoever he be that in this World hath followed his own Will, and the Motions of his corrupt Nature, and placed his Affections upon the Riches and Honors of this Life; he ſhall find himſelf at Death deprived of all Good, and confin'd to all the kinds of Evil which he hath loved in this World, without Remiſſion, and to all Eternity.

§. 13. I won't ſtop here to give you a particular Deduction of the Pains of Hell, ſince I have done it ſufficiently in the following Letter: Neither will I diſpute whether thoſe Torments are groſs and material, as ſome deſcribe them; ſince I hold, (*a*) that the Bodies of the Damned ſhall put off their Corruption, as well as the Bodies of the Bleſſed; and that they ſhall not any more have this univerſal Ruſt and Leproſie about them, which covers all the Members of their Bodies, becauſe all this Corruption, which through Sin hath over-ſpread whole Nature, ſhall return to nothing whence it came, and ſhall be no more found a thick Matter, as we ſee and feel it at preſent. But God's Works, as he has created them, will remain for ever, without having any End; ſince neither Death, nor any other ſort of Evil can hurt the Works of God, but (*b*) only by the Conſent and Free-will of Man; which Liberty notwithſtanding cannot annul any of God's Works; but it may indeed defile them, and cover them over with Filth, as *Adam* by his Sin hath ſtain'd and covered with Miſeries all the Human Race: Though the Body and Soul which God form'd for him (and for all Men in him) will remain for ever as he had made them at the Beginning. Hereupon it is, that the Article of our Faith is founded, which ſaith, *I believe the Reſurrection of the Body.* But many abuſe the Senſe of this Paſſage, becauſe the Apoſtle ſaith ſo expreſly, (*c*) *That we ſhall riſe with the ſame Body*; and herein he ſpeaks the Truth; ſince we carry ſtill in us the ſame Body, the ſame Fleſh, and the ſame Bones, which God hath given us, which is only cover'd with the Sackcloth of Corruption proceeding from Sin. Therefore we muſt infallibly believe the Reſurrection of the Body, but not the Reſurrection of our Corruption; ſeeing the Righteous ſhall be moſt happy in having put it off, and in being delivered from it, without believing or wiſhing ever to take it up again; but may well curſe the Hour in

(a) 1 *Cor.* xv. 52. (b) *Rom.* viii. 20. (c) 1 *Cor.* xv. 42, & 53.

which

which we put it on, with holy *Job* (*d*), who wiſely curſed the Day of his Birth into ſo miſerable a State as Sin hath made him be born in: Although the Ignorant attribute his great Wiſdom and Light to ſome Deſpair; becauſe they know not the Senſe of the Scriptures, they wreſt them, every one after his own manner, and meaſure God's Works by the Standard of their little Brains, which are corrupted by Sin.

§. 14. And hence it comes to paſs, that at this time there are ſo many contrary Opinions about the Holy Scriptures, and that Men have made ſo many Sects and Diviſions as are now to be ſeen in Chriſtendom, becauſe every one would be interpreting the Scripture in his own Faſhion, and drawing from it the things that favour moſt their own Remiſſneſs, and Degeneracy; and by this means every one is deceived, taking Error for Truth, which none can ever practiſe, but he who doth really deny *his own Will*. For what right Judgment can a Man make that's corrupted by Sin, as are the Minds of all Men deſcended of *Adam* ſince his Sin? Which Minds or Spirits by the ſame Sin have contracted yet more Miſeries than Mens Bodies: For the Miſeries of the Spirit are much more ſubtle and dangerous than thoſe corporal Miſeries, which are groſs and ſenſible; whereas the Spiritual Miſeries of the Mind are hidden; nay, ſometimes unknown even to the Perſon who labours under them. For how many are there in the World, who think they are wiſe, while indeed they are great Fools, and while their Minds are fill'd with fooliſh Idea's, with vain and unreaſonable Imaginations, which they frame to their own Ruin, to the Loſs of their Lives, or of the Salvation of their Souls? And all this is oft-times done, while they think they do what is beſt. So very brutiſh are their Souls become through Sin, that they are ſcarce any more capable of making a right Judgment of Things.

§. 15. How then can it be, that ſuch a corrupt Spirit can comprehend Divine Truths, or the Evangelical Law, with ſo brutiſh a Mind and ſo weak a Body? 'Tis in this View, that the Reformed teach and preach to the People, That it is not poſſible to keep the Goſpel-Law. Which is true, if we conſider only the Miſeries and Weakneſs of Man corrupted through Sin, without regarding *the* POWER OF GOD'S GRACE. This *Jeſus Chriſt* had a mind to ſhew his Diſciples, when they asked him, (*e*) *If it was then impoſſible for*

(*d*) *Job* iii. 1, &c. (*e*) *Mat.* xix. 24, 25, &c.

a rich

a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven? He anſwer'd them, *With Man it is impoſſible*; that is to ſay, as to the State of his Corruption: *But with God it is not impoſſible*; when Man ſhall give up himſelf entirely to the Will of *God*, and ſuffer himſelf to be wholly governed by him, then *God* will eaſily bring forth in him an *Evangelical Life*, and make it become good and pleaſant even to Nature it ſelf. This is what *David* boaſted of, ſaying, (*f*) *Thro' God I can do all things. It is God that girdeth me with Strength, and by my God I leap over a Wall.* For God hath ſaid (*g*), *He doth the Will of them that love him.* And again Jeſus Chriſt confirms this, ſaying, (*h*) *If ye that are evil know how to give good Gifts to your Children, how much more ſhall your Heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask and deſire it of him?* So that 'tis quite wrong and falſe to affirm, that Men cannot keep the Evangelical Law, ſince this Law is only given that it may be kept and obſerv'd; and ſince *Jeſus Chriſt* hath brought it from Heaven, as the only Remedy for all our Evils, and the alone Means of our Salvation: And ſeeing he himſelf hath ſaid, (*i*) *All theſe things have I done to give you an Example; be ye therefore Followers of me.* *God* will never preſcribe or command Man to do any thing, but that which he is willing to give him Grace to perform. But Man's Wickedneſs is ſo great, that he would always be attributing his own Faults to God, that he may charge him with the Cauſe of his Damnation, and inſinuate as if God were ſevere and cruel in laying upon him Burthens of Commands, which are inſupportable (to the end that Man may be juſtified, and God condemned.) Though in truth it be Man alone who is guilty of Condemnation, and who deſerves all the Evils that happen unto him, as alſo that of his own Damnation; ſeeing God always diſpenſes his Grace unto him moſt freely and in abundance, and that all thoſe Laws are very ſpecial Graces of *God*, and Marks of his *Love* to Man, that by theſe Graces he might draw him to his *Love* for his eternal Welfare. But wicked and ungrateful Man would be loading God with Blame and Reproach, inſtead of acknowledging with Thankſgiving ſo many Benefits as he has received from him. He will needs go and conſult his corrupt Nature, to ask it if 'tis poſſible for it to obſerve the Evangelical Law? To which it will always anſwer, *No*; ſince this (*k*) Impoſſibility is certainly in its Corruption, from which no Good can come,

(f) *Pſal.* xviii. 30, 33. (g) *Pſal.* cxlv. 19. (h) *Luke* xi. 13. (i) *Joh.* xiii. 15. (k) *Rom.* viii. 7, 8.

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how little ſoever it may be; and how much leſs ſhould that great Good, which ſurpaſſeth every other Good, proceed from this Corruption, namely, the Obſervance of the Evangelical Law? If ye take the Pains, *Dear Children of God*, to try and examine whether Man's Corruption can do good, or obſerve the Evangelical Law, ye ſhall always find that it *cannot*; and that it is as (*l*) impoſſible for this Corruption to do good, as it is for the Lion to change his natural Fierceneſs, or for the Leopard to change his Spots; ſince the one is as deeply rooted in his Nature as the other is in theirs. And indeed the Lion may ſooner be tamed, and the Leopard more eaſily tear his Skin, than one can ceaſe to do the Evil to which he is habituated: For the doing Evil is become natural to him, and to do good is repugnant to his corrupt Nature. So that ye muſt never believe nor hope that the corrupt Nature of Man can do good, or embrace an Evangelical Life; this being a ſworn Enemy to its Corruption, which always loves, deſires and ſeeks whatſoever is contrary to the Goſpel-Law.

§. 16. Hence any one that reſolves to live according to the Motions of his corrupt Nature, may very well ſay, that 'tis impoſſible for him to embrace an Evangelical Life; or rather ought to believe, that he is not willing to be ſaved, ſince that (*m*) the Working out his Salvation being in his own Power, he will not uſe the Means to come at it, becauſe he will not do Violence to his Corruption, that he may *take the Kingdom of Heaven by Force*: For the Scripture ſaith, (*n*) that *the Violent take it by Force*. Not as if this Kingdom were to be obtain'd by Fighting and Force of Arms, ſince it is given us, and prepared for us (*o*) *from the Foundation of the World*. But the Meaning is, that we muſt neceſſarily combat with Violence all the Inclinations of our Corruption, and reſiſt them with Force, that we may arrive at the Kingdom of Heaven, it being only thoſe ſtrong and violent ones who carry it. It is of this War againſt our Corruption of which the Scripture ſpeaketh, when it ſaith, (*p*) *Man's Life is a continual Warfare upon Earth*.

§. 17. It is not againſt the Powers of Hell, nor the Great and Mighty of the Earth we are engaged in War, but only againſt our own *corrupt Nature*, which is the greateſt Enemy we have, or can have in this World; ſince nothing has Power to damn us, (*q*) but our corrupt Nature, we need but to

(*l*) *Jer.* xiii. 23. (m) *Deut.* xxx. 19. *Phil.* ii. 12. (n) *Mat.* xi. 12. (*o*) Chap. xxv. 34. (p) *Job* vii. 1. (q) *Ja.* i. 14, 15.

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follow this, that we may be damned without any other Formality of Sin; gently obeying the Motions of this damnable Corruption, which draws ſuch mighty Numbers into Hell, even while many neither believe, nor are ſenſible of it. He is alſo greatly miſtaken, who thinks to attribute the Cauſe of his Damnation to the Devil, or to any other Occaſion whatever, ſeeing there's nothing that can damn Man but his own Corruption.

§. 18. The Devil may well raiſe evil Motions and Deſires in Man, by mixing with his corrupt Nature, that he may encline it to do Evil; but neither the Devil nor wicked Men can ever conſtrain Man's Will to do Evil: For ſince *God* hath made Man free, he will never force this Freedom, and much leſs can thoſe things force it which are leſs than *God*, as are Men, Devils, or any other Creatures, which have (*r*) no Power over the Free-will of Man; and therefore it ſhall remain free to all Eternity, whether Man be damned or ſaved. For if there were no Free-wills in Hell, no Devils or damned Souls could do Ill, ſeeing all that God has bounded and limited doth Good, and is good: For *God* could never do any Evil. Which we muſt always ſuppoſe in order to come to the Knowledge of the Truth; otherwiſe all Men ſhould be as thoſe *ſilly Women* the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, (*s*) *Led away with divers Luſts, which are always learning, and never able to come to the Knowledge of the Truth*, which is *God*.

§. 19. For they who have not diſcovered the Two Foundation-Stones of all things, can never miſs of being deceived, whatſoever their Belief or Speculations may be, they are deceived by their own Thoughts, and alſo do deceive others by their frivolous Words and Opinions: They are but Fools, even while they believe themſelves to be wiſe; if either they have not attain'd, or if they have loſt thoſe Two eſſential Truths, namely, (*t*) *That God is the only Source of all Good, from which never any Evil can come*: And (*u*) *That Man is the only Source of all our Evil, from whom never any Good can come.* Theſe eternal Truths are ſo firm and eſſential, that without obſerving them in every thing, Man has nothing but Error and Deceit in the whole Train of his Thoughts and Actions. This is the Cauſe of the Diviſions of all Chriſtendom, and of ſo many divers Sects and Religions as are to be found in it at preſent, wandering and walking in the Shadows of Death.

(r) *Ja.* iv. 7. (s) 2 *Tim.* iii. 6, 7. (t) *Ja.* i. 17. (u) *Jo.* xv. 4, 5, 6.

§. 20.

§. 20. For my part, I have not yet found ſo much as one Party of Religion in all Chriſtendom, (I mean thoſe I have any Knowledge of) which walks in the Truth of God, or is founded on theſe Two Fundamental Principles, namely, (v) *That there's no other Good but God*; and, (w) *That there are no other Evils, but thoſe which proceed from the corrupt Nature of Man.* Though truly and eſſentially ſpeaking there be no other Fundamental Truths but thoſe Two. Whence we may conclude, that there is not in the World any kind of Religion eſtabliſhed upon the eſſential Truth of God; ſince we ſee every one of 'em attributing ſome evil Qualities to God, and ſome good Qualities to corrupt Nature; ſome more and ſome leſs, according to the Ignorance of their Minds, which are blinded and corrupted through Sin. Every one utters Blaſphemies and Reproaches againſt *God*, as if he were unjuſt, or could do ill Things. Some put it as the Foundation of their Religion to aſcribe to Corruption a certain Power, Force or Vertue, though indeed it have nothing in it, but Weakneſs and Evil; as the *Arminians* do, who affirm, as the Ground of their Faith and Religion, That corrupt Man (ſuch as they alſo are through Sin) may ſave himſelf when he pleaſes, ſeeing he hath been created free by God.

§. 21. Which is true, if Man had uſed well this Divine Liberty which God hath given him. I agree with them in this, that Man at the Beginning (x) had received a Power from God to ſave himſelf when he pleas'd, ſince God thought not fit to reſerve to himſelf any Authority over Man's Free-will; being willing to leave him altogether free, as a little God, who could not in any thing be like unto God, but in reſpect of this Liberty only. For Man's Body being material, could not have any Reſemblance with a *God*, who is pure Spirit; though 'tis true this Human Body had a great many fine Qualities, ſuch as Agility, Subtility, Brightneſs, *&c.* Yet for all that, it was not in any thing like to *God*, who is inviſible and incomprehenſible, without Body, whether Material or Spiritual, or any Form or Figure whatſoever. Hence we ſee, that all the good and beautiful Qualities which God had vouchſafed to Man, could not in any wiſe render him like to God, or to his Image. It was neceſſary, that ſome Supreme and Divine Quality ſhould make this Likeneſs and Reſemblance. (y) Which Divine Quality is nothing elſe but this *full Liberty*, which God hath

(v) *Luke* xiix. 19. (w) *Mat.* vii. 15. *Jer.* ii. 19. (x) *Eccleſ.* xv. 14. (y) *Pſal.* cx. 3.

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been pleas'd to give to Man, to the End he might form him after his own Likeneſs. This Liberty being neither Body nor Spirit, may be truly called God, and nothing elſe. Since it is only a *Divine Power proceeding from God, which operates in the Soul of Man whatſoever he wills or deſires by a Motion of his Will.* And as when God will'd that the World ſhould be made, it was made; ſo likewiſe when Man deſired to be ſaved, he was ſaved through this Divine Power which God had communicated to him. He could abſolutely do what he would, and ſave himſelf when he would: Even as now thoſe blind *Arminians* would have it, not diſtinguiſhing between the State of God's Grace, and the State of Corruption which Man is reduced to by Sin; and attributing as much Power to Corruption as God had given to this Liberty, when at firſt he created Man.

§. 22. 'Tis from hence that the Miſtakes and Errors of their Religion do proceed, it not being founded upon this eſſential Truth, namely, *THAT THERE IS NO GOOD BUT WHAT COMETH FROM GOD*; attributing to their corrupt Natures the Good of being able to ſave themſelves when they would, though they read in the Scripture, (z) *That all Good cometh down from the Father of Lights*; and that *Jeſus Chriſt* ſaid to the Diſciple, that called him Good Maſter (a), *Why calleſt thou me good, ſeeing there is none good but God*, who alone is Holy? How then ſhould thoſe *Arminians* have in themſelves this Good, to be able to ſave themſelves when they pleaſe, ſeeing there's *no Good, great or ſmall, which doth not flow from God*; which is an Eternal and Fundamental Truth over all things? As is alſo this other, That from corrupt Man no Good can proceed, no more than from a ſtinking Veſſel full of Filth can come pure and delicious Wine. So that thoſe poor *Arminians* are no ways able to bring forth the Good of their Salvation from their own Souls, nor ſo much as the Good deſire of their Salvation from their corrupt Wills. For the Scripture tells us alſo, (b) That *out of the Treaſure of the Heart a Man bringeth forth ſuch things as are in it*: To wit, *Out of the evil Heart, he bringeth forth evil things; and out of the good Heart, good things.* Now the good Heart can be no other but the Heart which God poſſeſſeth, and which he filleth with all good things: But the Heart which is poſſeſſed with Self-love, and cleaveth to its own Corruption, cannot chuſe but be fill'd with ill things, from which nothing can come but Evil and Sin; ſo far is it from being true, that

(z) *Ja.* i. 17. (a) *Luke* xix. 19. (b) *Mat.* xii. 35.

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out of it can come the Power of ſaving one's ſelf, which is the greateſt Good that can be imagin'd.

§. 23. But theſe poor ignorant Men, being ambitious both of Virtue and Power, make it an Article of their Faith, or one of the Grounds of their Religion, *That they have a Free-will, by which they can ſave themſelves when they pleaſe.* Which is falſe and deceitful, though they tell me, that ſeveral have loſt their Lives for maintaining this Opinion: And I'm likewiſe told, that many others have affirmed the quite contrary to the Loſs of their Lives; believing, *That Man hath no Free-will, but that God hath predeſtined ſome to Damnation, and others to Salvation.* This is yet a greater Blaſphemy againſt God; for it ſhocks both the Goodneſs and Juſtice of God, making him a partial Chuſer and Reſpecter of Perſons, which cannot be true of God, for the Scripture aſſures the contrary, ſaying; (c) *That God is no Reſpecter of Perſons.* God alone is Holy and Righteous, nothing of Injuſtice can ever proceed from him. But becauſe they have loſt *thoſe Two Fundamental Truths*, both have err'd as to what they ought to believe. The *Arminians* have believed, that their Free-will hath as yet as much Power to ſave them ſince the Corruption of Sin, as it had when God at firſt created them, or while they continued in the State of Innocence. Which is a mighty Preſumption in them, to make their Boaſt of a Grace or Virtue which they have ſo miſerably loſt through their Wickedneſs and Sin; for theſe have filled them with all ſorts of Evil, and deprived them of all manner of Good: Sin having once ſeparated them from *God*, the Fountain of all Good, plunged them into all kinds of Evil, which is the Privation of all Good. Since Evil was never created by God, and is but a miſerable Nothing, without Body and without Spirit, having no Being and no Power, but that of depriving Man of all Good, which is the greateſt of all Evils. For there are no other Evils, but the Privation of Good: For Inſtance: A Diſeaſe hath not in it ſelf either Body or Spirit, or rather, it hath no other Being, but that of depriving the Perſon of Health; which is the only Evil of the Diſeaſe: Since a Perſon would not be ſick, nor feel any Illneſs, if he were not deprived of his Health. And it is this Privation of Health alone which makes his Malady; for otherwiſe all manner of Illneſs put together could not hurt him, not having the Power to deprive the Perſon of his Health. It is this Privation only which makes the Diſeaſe. Like as there is no other Blind-

(c) *Acts* x. 34. *Rom.* ii. 11. 1 *Pet.* i. 15.

neſs

neſs, but the Privation of Sight; no other Deafneſs, but the Privation of Hearing; no other Cold, but the Privation of Heat; no other Folly, but the Privation of Judgment, or good Senſe; and ſo of every thing elſe. Since God (*d*) never gave a Being to Evil, it can be no other thing but a damnable Privation of the good Things which God had diſpenſed to Man; for he had made him a Creature altogether perfect and compleat in Body and Spirit, of ſound Judgment and good Health, without any Trouble or Diſorder of his Senſes, without Diſpleaſure or Fretting, without Pain, without Intemperance, without Malady, and without Death; very Good, very Wiſe, and very Powerful.

§. 24. All theſe Perfections were eſſential to Man, ſeeing God ſaw this his Work to be perfect, and rejoyced in it; neither doth he ever (*e*) repent of his Works, having been always willing to let Man enjoy theſe Perfections, if Man by his Free-will had not depriv'd himſelf of ſo many Favours and Privileges receiv'd from God thro' his Mercy alone. But inſtead of acknowledging them by a **RECIPROCAL LOVE**; (which was the only thing (*f*) that God requir'd of Man, *who was created for no other End but to Love his God*) this poor Wretch turned away his Affections from his Creator, ſeeking to love himſelf and other created Things. By this means he hath robb'd himſelf of ſo many Favours which he had ſo liberally received. The Love of himſelf hath depriv'd him of the Love of his God; his fooliſh Actions hath depriv'd him of his Wiſdom and good Senſe; the ſeeking after his Eaſe hath depriv'd him of his Health; and the Love of this Life hath robb'd him of eternal Life, and occaſion'd his Death (*g*). Behold theſe are the Operations which Sin hath had upon the Soul of Man, depriving him of his Judgment, of the Joy, Peace and Tranquility of his Spirit, and likewiſe of the Health, Strength and Vigor of his Body. And all this by the Turn which Man's Free-will hath taken from the Affection and **LOVE OF HIS GOD**, in which *Love* conſiſteth all Good, like as in the Privation of this **LOVE** conſiſts all Evil, which is that miſerable Nothing that deprives of all Good. Hereby it is eaſie to comprehend, that God hath not created any Evil, and that all the Evils which we ſee and feel are the Productions of Man's *Free-will*, which being once accuſtom'd to do Evil, can't without great Difficulty do any Good.

(*d*) *Wiſd.* i. 13; 14. (*e*) *Rom.* xi. 29. (f) *Prov.* xxiii. 26. (g) *Rom.* i. 21, &c. Chap. iii. 10. v. 12.

§ 25. Not that Man ſhall ever loſe this his Liberty, which *God* hath once given him; for God is Eternal in his Decrees, and will (*h*) never repent of that he hath once thought fit to give or to do. For the Devils themſelves and damned Souls will have always and to all Eternity their *Liberty* continued with them, as alſo the Holy Angels and Souls of the Bleſſed; though both of 'em uſe it very differently, the one to love and to praiſe God, the other to hate and blaſpheme him. Which they are alſo free to do, ſince being turned away from the LOVE of their GOD, they are by conſequence fal'n into all manner of Evil, which (as hath been ſaid) is no other but the Privation of all Good. And thus theſe wretched Souls, or thoſe Devils and damned Spirits, can no more do any good, having utterly departed from the Love of their God, the Fountain of all Good, out of which Departure all their Evils do ariſe. Yet the Reaſon of this is not that God takes away the Liberty which he hath once given them, but becauſe the more the Soul departs from God, the more it is fill'd with Evils of all ſorts, which becoming habitual, are changed into Nature, and render'd as 'twere impoſſible to be alter'd; becauſe the Free-will it ſelf is not willing to alter, ſeeking always to pleaſe it ſelf even unto the end in its accuſtomed Evils.

§. 26. So that there's an Impoſſibility to do Good on the Part of Man's Corruption, though there can be no ſuch Impoſſibility on the Part of this *Liberty* in which God had created him. In this Senſe it is ſaid, that the Devil cannot change; which notwithſtanding he could very well do, if he follow'd the Spring of this Divine Quality, with which God had created him altogether free. But neither the Devil nor the damned Souls are at all willing to uſe their Liberty to do Good; for being ſo accuſtom'd to do Evil, they uſe the ſame Liberty to perſiſt in the Evil, which they have voluntarily choſen, inſtead of the Good which they might have choſen. Hence we can't well ſay, that the Devils and damn'd Souls have in them (or are under) an Impoſſibility of doing Good, or of being converted unto God; but we may more truly affirm, that they have an obſtinate Stiffneſs in Evil, from which their Free-wills are not willing to deſiſt. The Caſe is the ſame with the Children of Sorcerers or Witches, of whom it is ſaid, That it is impoſſible for them not to be Witches like their Parents; which is falſe. For if the Child of a Witch, coming to the Uſe of Reaſon, did ſtrongly

(h) *Rom.* xi. 29.

reſiſt

reſiſt the Devil, and the Maledictions of his Parents, he might very well get out of the Power of the Devil, even though the Parents had given the Child a Thouſand times in his Non-age to the Devil. The full Liberty which God hath given him at his Creation is capable to deliver him from the Devil's Slavery, to which his Parents had ſubjected him before the Child had attain'd the Uſe of his Reaſon. Which nevertheleſs happens but very ſeldom; becauſe the Child thus given to the Devil by his Parents, is wholly accuſtom'd to Evil from his very Youth up. And this ill Cuſtom is changed into Nature, and rooted in the tender Fleſh of the Infant. So that it is not without great Difficulty and Violence that this Child can ceaſe to do Evil. For which Reaſon many of thoſe Perſons continue long in the Struggle and Combat, and very few there be of the Children of Witches, who are not alſo voluntary Witches, being once come to the Uſe of their Reaſon. As (*i*) all Men are born Children of Wrath and Perdition, ſo they are always enclin'd to Evil, in which they are born, and can never be ſaved but in turning away from this Evil which is in them, reſiſting it by the *Power of Faith*.

§. 27. This is a general Rule for all Men deſcended of *Adam*, ſince his Fall. For we muſt not think, that any one ever hath been, or ſhall be ſaved, but ſuch as after they have arrived to the Uſe of Reaſon, ſhall reſiſt and wage War with the Evil which Sin hath brought into Human Nature; that ſo they may firmly adhere to God's DESIGN in creating them, which was only to LOVE THEIR GOD; ſince out of this End and this Love of God there can be no Salvation, which is a thing that no Man can give to himſelf, or to any one elſe; 'tis God only who is the Giver of all Good, and free from all manner of Evil. But how can he be ſuppos'd to give Salvation to this Corruption of Man, which is the Source of all our Evil? (*k*) What Sympathy can there be between the Fountain of all Good, and the Source of all Evil, as if they could enter into any Friendſhip or Alliance together, or as if the Work of God could be join'd with Man's Corruption? Theſe can in no wiſe dwell together, much leſs than in Nature Fire can be ſaid to abide with Water: For the ſtronger of thoſe Two Elements muſt always neceſſarily carry it: If the Fire is greater than the Water, it drinks it up and dries it; and if the Water is more than the Fire, it entirely extinguiſhes it. (*l*) Juſt ſo is it with the Soul of Man,

(i) *Eph.* ii. 3. (k) 2 *Cor.* vi. 4, &c. (l) *Rom.* vi. 16. Ch. viii. 5.

which can never dwell in the Fire of the LOVE OF GOD, and in the Love of its own Corruption at the ſame time; for if this is ſtronger than the *Love of God*, it entirely ſtifles it; ſo that not ſo much as one Spark of the *Divine Love* remains in the Soul of Man: But when the Fire of the *Love of God* has the Aſcendant, and is ſtronger than the Love of one's Corruption, it wholly drieth up this Water of *Self-love*, of Senſualities and Earthly Deſires, for to preſerve always this burning Fire of the Love of God, which conſumes by little and little all the peccant Humors and Motions of this Corruption.

§. 28. Such Souls as theſe are certainly ſaved and predeſtined to Salvation, but not ſuch as the miſtaken *Calviniſts* take to be the Elect of God; ſince God will never elect any thing but the Works of his own Hands; becauſe whatſoever proceeds not from him is evil, and therewith God can have no Fellowſhip or Communion. Wherefore we muſt not think that God will ever ſave any one who reſolves to follow the Motions of his corrupt Nature: He muſt needs entirely renounce his Corruption, and die to the Old *Adam*, that he may riſe again to the New *Adam*, which is the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt; who wholly denied the Motions of our Nature, which he had voluntarily cloathed himſelf with, to give us an Example, and to ſhew us by what means we might recover the *Love of God*, which Sin hath deprived Man of. The Scripture teſtifies ſufficiently, that we cannot be ſaved, but in being born again in the Spirit of *Jeſus Chriſt*: For it ſaith, (*m*) *If ye are not converted, and made as little Children, ye ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* And (*n*), *That he who is not born again of Water and of the Spirit cannot be ſaved.* And elſewhere it affirmeth, (*o*) that *Fleſh and Blood ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* All Chriſtians know theſe Truths, and read theſe Paſſages, with a great many more, without underſtanding the Senſe of the Scriptures. They acknowledge they muſt be born again in order to be ſaved, but they don't underſtand what this *New Birth* is. They place it in certain Speculations, or in ſome good Inclinations and Deſires of living well, and being Chriſtians; thinking they are regenerate when they have only the Deſire to be ſo. And thus all Men deceive themſelves, and will be confounded at their Death, when they find themſelves ſtill cloathed with the Sackcloth of this old Corruption proceeding from *Adam* their Father, who cannot ſave them, no more

(*m*) *Mat.* xviii. 3. (*n*) *Jo.* iii. 5. (*o*) 1 *Cor.* xv. 50.

than

than he was able to ſave himſelf. For he was neceſſarily obliged (*p*) to fight againſt his Corruption, by a long and ſevere Penitence, macerating his Body, ſubduing his Mind, lamenting and hating his accurſed Corruption, which had render'd him ſo miſerable, until at length having recovered the **LOVE OF HIS GOD**, through his great Mercy, and dying in it, he obtained Salvation; as all thoſe ſhall likewiſe do who will take the ſame way, (*q*) embracing the ſame Penitence, and deteſting the Inclinations of this accurſed Corruption, that they may return to God. Behold this is the only way of Salvation, wherein all Men muſt walk, if they would arrive at Eternal Life.

§. 29. None ſhould flatter themſelves ſo far, as to believe, that Men corrupted by Sin can ever be ſaved thro' the Merits of *Jeſus Chriſt*, after the manner that ſome of the Reformed do teach, ſince *Jeſus Chriſt* (*r*) hath not merited any thing for ſuch as in this World will continue to follow the Motions of their Corruption; becauſe God cannot ſave any one by force, after his having created all Men free (*s*): The Merits of *Jeſus Chriſt* will never force any Man's Free-will to ſave him, while he is not willing to be ſaved. And that Perſon is not willing to be ſaved, who will not renounce his damnable Corruption, which (*t*) is condemned in it ſelf, without any further Miſdeeds. How can *God* ſave a corrupt Perſon againſt all Right and Juſtice, ſeeing 'tis written, (*u*) *That nothing that's unclean ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

§. 30. And what ſhould thoſe Souls that are ſtinking in Corruption and Death, do in Paradiſe, among the pure Spirits, which have (*w*) *waſhed their Robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb*? This is the Penitence, and Sufferings, and Death of this Corruption, which is the Robe wherewithal Sin hath covered the Work of God. Which Robe muſt be waſh'd off with the Sufferings and Death of *Jeſus Chriſt*, not after the manner that theſe *Calviniſts* would give out, as if the Sufferings of *Jeſus Chriſt* did enter into Mens Corruption to cleanſe it, and render them ſound and whole by the Blood which he hath ſhed. This theſe ignorant Men think they have learned from the Scriptures, which ſay, (*x*) *That the Blood of* Jeſus Chriſt *doth cleanſe us from all Sin*: So the Text affirmeth, though they do not comprehend the Senſe of it. Seeing the Blood of *Jeſus Chriſt* ſhall never waſh but thoſe

(p) *Gen.* iii. 17, 18, 19. (q) *Rev.* iii. 19, 20. (r) *Jo.* xvii. 9. (s) *Rev.* xxii. 17. *Pſal.* cx. 3. (t) *Eph.* ii. 3. (u) *Rev.* xxi 27. (w) *Rev.* vii. 14. (x) 1 *Jo.* i. 7.

Perſons, who, reſiſting unto Blood, yea even to Death, ſhall fight againſt their corrupt Nature, to overcome and kill it, that the Spirit of *Chriſt* may live in them, by being born again through the Death of the Old *Adam* unto the New, which is *Jeſus Chriſt*. This is the Blood, and theſe are the Sufferings of Penitence and Warfare, which waſh away this Robe of Sin and Corruption, but not the material Blood, which went forth from the Body of *Jeſus Chriſt*; for this crieth, like the Blood of *Abel*, for Vengeance (*x*) upon them that ſhed it. For it was not needful that Blood ſhould go forth from the Veins of *Jeſus Chriſt* to ſave Man, but 'tis neceſſary that Blood and Penitence ſhould proceed from the Bodies of all them, who are willing to be ſaved. Since *God*, who hath forbidden the *Jews* (*y*), *To eat any unclean thing*, will be far from taking himſelf the Uncleanneſs of Man's Corruption into his own Kingdom. He chuſeth only the Work of his own Hands, and not the Work of Devils or Men, who equally damned themſelves, in having voluntarily and deliberately withdrawn their Affections from God.

§. 31. This voluntary Departure which they have made from the LOVE of their GOD, renders them abſolutely unworthy of eternal Salvation; and though a Thouſand *Chriſts* ſhould die for them, that would not force their Free-wills, or conſtrain them to Salvation, ſeeing God was, is, and always will be willing to have them FREE, and without any Conſtraint. So that neither *Jeſus Chriſt*, nor God himſelf, will ever force this full Liberty which he hath given Man, and which he will always preſerve entire. Not as if there was wanting any Power in God to do whatſoever he would; no, for his Power is as great in leaving Man free, as it would have been in confining him to Good: And his Will is as perfect (nay, more) in being willing not to know what Man would do with his Free-will, as in foreſeeing and knowing what he ſhall do. Therefore how fooliſhly would ſome be attributing a ſort of Ignorance to God, if he had not (*z*) foreſeen what Man was to do in his Life in order to Predeſtinate him to Salvation: Since the Wiſdom of God is as great in not being willing to know what Man ſhall do, as it is great in foreſeeing his whole Conduct and Actions; eſpecially when God is willing not to know them, that he may leave Man fully to enjoy the Liberty which he was pleaſed to

(x) 1 *Theſſ.* ii. 15. (y) *Lev.* xi. (z) *Jer.* xxxii. 35. *Jon.* iii. 4, & 10. *Jer.* xxxvii. 9. compar'd with xxxviii. 17. *Ezek.* xxxiii. 14, &c.

give

give him. But Mens Minds being corrupted by Sin, and not being able to comprehend the Deſigns and Decrees of God, would be fancying, that God were ignorant, if he had not foreſeen what Man was to do that he might ſave him. Thus would blind Man be fooliſhly judging of God's Works ‡ before he knows them: And thus do they invent a Thouſand Errors in their vain Imaginations, blaſpheming againſt God after ſeveral Ways and Manners, making him like to a paſſionate Perſon, who loves one, and hates another, as theſe *Calviniſts* pretend, *That God, after the Fall of* Adam, *took or choſe one part of this corrupt Maſs, and left the other in the Corruption, into which it fell of it ſelf in* Adam.

§. 32. Which is falſe and deceitful, ſince God can never chuſe Evil or Corruption, which Man only hath made, and he hath nothing to do with the Works of Men, which are altogether wicked. He hath entirely left this Evil and this Corruption in *Adam*, who was alone at the time of his Fall, though he bore in his Loins the Seed of all Men. God did not rend his Body into Two Parts, no more than his Seed, that he might curſe one Part, and ſhew Favour to the other. But he curſed [ſinful] *Adam* entirely, (*a*) with his Poſterity, ſeeing all Men were in him, and that his Will alone was the Will of all his Poſterity; for theſe not being as yet produced, could not have the Uſe of their Free-wills, which were all Sympathetically united to [and comprehended in] the alone Will of *Adam*, who could (as far as in him lay) ſave or deſtroy all the Men which God had created in him. For which Reaſon we ought never to imagine, that God hath choſen (*b*) one Part of the corrupt Maſs of *Adam*, to predeſtinate it to Salvation, and hath left the other Part in the State of Damnation, wherein Man had plunged himſelf; becauſe that were an Act of Injuſtice, which can never be found in God, ſince one of the Parts of that Maſs had ſinned no more than the other, and was indiviſibly as culpable as the other. How then could God reſcue one of the Parts from Damnation, and leave the other to periſh, though it was equally guilty, (*c*) without any kind of Difference? And how could God, being altogether good, unite to himſelf that Corruption or Damnation, which deprives of all Good? And how can this Privation of all Good, agree with the Poſſeſſion of all Good, ſeeing the one abſolutely excludes the other; and that this Corruption, which is the Privation of all Good, cannot dwell in God,

‡ *Job* xxxviii. 2. (a) *Rom.* v. 19. 4 *Eſdr.* vii. 48. (b) *Rom.* iii. 22, 23, 29. (c) *Eph.* ii. 3.

in whom is the Poſſeſſion of all Good? Theſe are Contradictions ſo very abſurd, that one may juſtly wonder how ſuch Thoughts have entred into Man's Heart, as to believe that God could have choſen out of the corrupt Maſs of *Adam*, one part of Men to be ſaved, ſince (*d*) Salvation depends upon the *Love of God*, and that corrupt Maſs (*e*) hates God, who therefore would not have choſen (*f*) his Enemy to be in his Company, but would rather reject him far from him, as *Jeſus Chriſt* ſaid to the People, (*g*) *Depart from me all ye that work Iniquity.* By a far greater Reaſon God could have ſaid to *Adam*, "Depart from me, thou perfidious and ungrateful Sinner; for after I had created thee to be loved by "thee, thou haſt turned thy Affections towards thy ſelf, and "other things leſs than Me. Again. If *Adam* could have been divided into Two Parts, and God had taken one of theſe Parts to ſave it, and left the other in the State of Damnation, one might then doubt that this Predeſtination had ſome Colour of Reaſon: But to ſay, that of the one Body of *Adam*, one part ſhall be ſaved, and another part damned, by the expreſs Will of *God*, that has not the leaſt Appearance of Truth; for no Body believes there were Two *Adams*, and that the Children of the one ſhould be ſaved, and the Children of the other damned. Since all Chriſtians do agree in this Point, That God made but one Man only in the Beginning (*h*), of whom all other Men ſhould deſcend; and that this Man alone (*i*) by his Sin hath ruin'd all Mankind without excepting one: For all they that ſhall do good, as well as they that ſhall do evil, were created in his Loins, and therefore have all equally partaken of his Sin before they had a Being: How then can God be ſaid to foreſee who would do good, or who would do evil, that he might predeſtinate them to Salvation or Damnation, ſince he was pleas'd to create them (*k*) all free, without any Exception, and to wait (*l*) to ſee whether they would do well or ill with the Liberty which He had given them, being left free (*m*) to uſe it in doing either Good or Evil, He being unwilling to determine or conſtrain them by any Foreſight or Decree.

§. 33. I know very well they diſpute againſt this *Liberty* from ſome Paſſages of the Holy Scripture, as that where 'tis

(d) *Jo.* xiv. 21, 23. (e) *Rom.* viii. 7. (f) *Luke* xix. 27. (g) *Luke* xiii. 27. (h) *Acts* xvii. 26. (i) *Rom.* v. 12. (k) *Eccleſ.* xv. 14, &c. (l) *Luke* xiii. 8, 9. *Iſai.* v. 1, &c. *Mat.* xxv. 14, 15. (m) *Gen.* iv. 7. *Deut.* xxx. 19.

ſaid,

ſaid, (n) Jacob *have I loved, but* Eſau *have I hated.* This cometh from hence, that Men have not received the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt, which is called, (o) *The Gift of Wiſdom and Underſtanding*, to know the Scriptures, and therefore they often take the Bark for the Wood, and the Figure for the thing figured. For theſe Twins brought forth by *Iſaac*'s Wife are but a Figure, (p) ſignifying, that God always loveth and chuſeth the Good, repreſented by *Jacob*; and likewiſe that he always rejecteth the Evil, repreſented by *Eſau*. Since the Beloved *Jacob* repreſents always the Soul which loveth its *God*, as *Eſau* ſtill repreſents the Soul which loves it ſelf. And theſe Two Souls do always ſtrive one with another, to ſee who ſhall have the Preheminence and Inheritance of their Father's Goods. The Soul which loveth its God, accounts it ſelf unworthy of them, being abaſed and humbled with a Senſe of its Miſeries: But the Soul that loveth it ſelf, thinks it hath merited all by the Merits of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and becauſe of this, will not do any thing to work out its own Salvation, according to the Apoſtle's Advice, (q) namely, *Work out your Salvation with Fear and Trembling*; preſuming, that this belongs to him by Right of Inheritance. But herein it is greatly miſtaken, as *Eſau* was (r) in thinking he was aſſured of his Birth-right, which he ſold for a Meſs of Pottage: Thus the Soul which loves it ſelf loſeth the Inheritance of eternal Life for the ſake of ſome ſenſual Pleaſure, which paſſeth away in a Moment, chuſing (s) a little Satisfaction to corrupt Nature, rather than Eternal Joy and Repoſe. Behold how the Soul that loves it ſelf is deprived of its Birth-right, which it ſhall never obtain, after that it hath choſen to follow here the Motions of its *corrupt Nature*. It will certainly thereby loſe the right of the Inheritance of Eternal Joy, which God giveth only to thoſe Souls that live and die in his Love. Theſe are the *Jacobs* whom God hath choſen, but he rejecteth all the Souls which live and die in their Self-Loves: Theſe only are the *Eſaus* whom God rejecteth, and none beſides; ſince God loveth all the Works of his Hands; for having lookt upon all that he had made (t), *he found that it was very good.* Hence 'tis plain, that whatſoever is Evil is not of *God*, but rejected by him: And thus was *Adam* rejected with his whole Poſterity, when he voluntarily withdrew his Affections from his God to love himſelf and the other Creatures (u). This

(n) *Rom.* ix. 13. (o) *Iſa.* xi. 2. (p) 4 *Eſdr.* vi. 8, 9. *Rom.* ix. 13, 32. (q) *Phil.* ii. 19. (r) *Heb.* xii. 16, 17. (s) *Luke* xvi. 19, 25. (t) *Gen.* i. 31. (u) *Rev.* xxii. 15.

Evil

Evil was hated and reprobated by God, and will always be whereſoever it is found. This is that *Eſau* which ſhall never find Mercy thro' *Jeſus Chriſt*: For 'tis only the good Souls [the Seed] of *Jacob* which ſhall be ſaved thro' his Merits, (v) when being come to the uſe of Reaſon, and ſeeing the Miſeries into which Sin and their Self-Love have thrown them, they will deteſt their Corruption, and hate themſelves with all that Sin hath produced in them; continually reſiſting their Self-Love, and fighting againſt the Motions of their corrupt Nature, that they may leave themſelves to be guided by God, to the end they may effectually return to his Love. Behold theſe are the Souls which God hath choſen and predeſtin'd to Salvation out of the Maſs of *Adam*, and none but theſe.

§. 34. Whatſoever ſome may ſay, or howſoever they may gloſs this *Predeſtination*, all is but the meer Imagination and corrupt Reaſoning of Men, invented to flatter their Remiſneſs and Degeneracy, deſiring to live and die out of the Grace and Love of God, and notwithſtanding this to be happy to all Eternity. But this is altogether deceitful; for God will never ſave the Evil, which he rejecteth, and will always reject, wherever it is, being no Reſpecter or Predeſtinator of any one's Perſon. 'Twill be ſaid in the Day of Judgment, (w) *Behold the Man and his Works*; and not, *Behold the Man with his Fate or his Predeſtination, which will have no Place at the Judgment Seat of God; for then he will reward every Man according to his Works.* I know theſe degenerate Men, being ignorant of the Truth of God, find ſtill ſome Exceptions againſt the neceſſity of doing good Works; alledging that Scripture (x) which ſaith; *that our good Works or Righteouſneſſes are as filthy Rags*; and adding "*Therefore* we are not to do good "Works in order to be ſaved, but muſt expect Salvation thro' "pure Mercy. And thoſe who would deceive more ſubtilly "ſay, we ought indeed to do good Works, tho' not to obtain "Salvation, but by way of Gratitude or Acknowledgment to "God: As if God wanted our Acknowledgment, or (y) as if Men could make Preſents of their good Works to thank him. Which cannot be ſaid but in contempt of the Riches of God, who poſſeſſeth all things in himſelf, asketh not any thing out of himſelf, and (z) needeth not any thing Man can give him. But becauſe blind Men are now given up to a Spirit of Error, therefore they miſtake the whole Senſe of the Scriptures, un-

(v) 2 *Tim.* iv. 7, 8. *Rev.* xii. 11. (w) *Matth.* xxv. 35, 42. *Pſ.* l. 21. *Matth.* xvi. 27. (x) *Iſ.* lxiv. 6. (y) *Job* xxxv. 7, 8. (z) *Acts* xvii. 25.

derſtanding

derſtanding no more than the Letter, and that very groſſy too, ſpeaking of *God* as of a paſſionate Perſon, who wanteth or deſireth ſomething in acknowledgment of the Good he hath done to Men; though in effect God is independent of every thing, and will never ask any thing of any one. All the good Works which Men can do, ſerve for no other end but (*a*) to combat and overcome the Evils of their Corruption, which muſt needs be ſtifled and ſubdued by (*b*) their Contraries: As for example (*c*), the Covetouſneſs which Sin hath planted in Man's Heart, muſt be ſurmounted by his Liberality in giving of his Goods to the Poor; and (*d*) the Hatred of his Neighbour muſt be conquer'd by the Good-will and aſſiſtance which he ought to ſhew him in his need. Juſt ſo Pride of Heart muſt be ſubdued (*e*), by often repeated Acts of Humility; Wrath and Arrogance (*f*), by Meekneſs and Gentleneſs. Sloth (*g*), is to be overcome by Diligence, both Spiritual and Temporal; Gluttony (*h*), by Abſtinence; Luxury (*i*), by Continence; and ſo of all the reſt: Every Sin muſt neceſſarily be ſurmounted by ſome good Work, if we would be ſaved; without fancying, *that good Works are not requiſite to Salvation*; or, *that we ought to do them only by way of Acknowledgment*; as thoſe blind Men tell us: Seeing good Works (*k*) are no leſs neceſſary to our Salvation, than Bread is neceſſary for the Suſtentation of the Body. For we muſt needs overcome our Corruption, that we may be Saved; and none can overcome it but by the means of good Works, ſhocking the Sins and Vices which this Corruption hath brought into the Soul of Man, which (*l*) can never be ſaved but in overcoming the Evil that is in it; to which End every one ought to labor Night and Day by good Works, Faſtings and Prayers.

§. 35. Not as if thoſe things were valuable or meritorious in themſelves; but becauſe our Corruption hath need of them that it may be ſubdued; like as an Horſe hath need of a Whip in order to be managed: So brutal is our Nature become thro' Sin, that it can't do any thing well, but by conſtraint and force of good Works. For this Reaſon the Scripture ſaith, (*m*) *that our Life is a continual Combat*; and again, (*n*) *that the Kingdom of Heaven muſt be taken by force.* And

(a) *Matth.* xxvi 41. *Rom.* xii. 21. 1 *Cor.* ix. 26, 27. (b) *Gal.* v. 17, 24. (c) 1 *Tim.* vi. 17, 18. (d) *Matth.* v. 44. (e) *Phil.* ii. 3. *Rom.* xii. 16. (f) *Eph.* iv. 31, 32. (g) 2 *Theſ.* iii. 11, 12. *Heb.* 12. 12. (h) 1 *Pet.* 4. 3, 4, 7. (i) *Job* xxxi. 1. 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 3,4,5. (k) *Ja.* ii. 26. (l) *Rom.* viii. 13. (m) *Job* vii. 1. (n) *Matth.* xi. 13.

there-

therefore if we ought always to Fight, we ought always to do as many good Works as we can; not that they are capable to merit Heaven; for this (o) God hath given us freely before we had Life, or could merit any thing. Wherefore the *Reformed* do very unjuſtly find Fault with Mens doing good Works to merit: Whereas they ought to blame themſelves for not doing any thing to recover the *Love of God*, which is ſo neceſſary for their Salvation. They ought rather to blame their Impenitence than good Works, which ſerve always more to ſubdue the Fleſh and moderate the Paſſions, than to do Ill; as they falſely perſuade themſelves: Since the Scripture expreſly ſaith, (p) *except ye repent*, (do Penance) *ye ſhall all Periſh.* They chuſe rather to periſh in doing nothing, or in living like the Beaſts, according to the Motions of their Nature, than to endeavour *to work out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, as the Apoſtle adviſeth, (q) for it is ſaid, (r) *according to your Works ye ſhall be Juſtified, and according to your Works ye ſhall be Condemned.*

§. 36. It is true, the good Works of Men who live according to corrupt Nature, are but Dung and Filth before God: So ſaith he himſelf by his Prophet, (ſ) *I will throw the Dung of your ſolemn Feaſts into your Faces.* And elſewhere (t) he declares that *he ſearcheth the Heart and Reins*; and (u) *that he will Condemn our Righteouſneſſes.* This is very true, ſeeing all the Righteouſneſs and Virtue which flows from corrupt Nature, are but Abominations and unclean Sacrifices before God; for nothing that's good can come from corrupt Man: All that's in him is Evil and Deſpiſed of *God*, who cannot love but the Good that proceedeth from himſelf; there being no other Good but what is in him alone. But we are not to think for all this in a quite wrong Senſe, that therefore we ought not to do any good Works, ſince the Scripture tells us (w), *Sanctifie your Faſts.* This is not as if we were not to faſt, or ought to deſpiſe Faſting, or any other good Works whatſoever; but it ſerves to teach us that we muſt do all our good Works in [the Spirit of Holineſs and] Sanctification, and pray that God would ſanctifie them in us; ſeeing there's nothing Holy but God alone (x). We ought not to do our good Works out of natural Complacency, or out of Preſumption of *Spirit, but only by Humility* and Penitence, to kill this old Man

(o) *Matth.* xxv. 34. (p) *Luke* xiii. 3. (q) *Phil.* ii. 12. (r) *Matth.* xii. 37. *ch.* xvi. 27. (ſ) *Mal.* ii. 3. (t) *Rev.* ii. 23. (u) *Luke* xviii. 9, 14. (w) *Joel* ii. 15. (x) *Matth.* 6. 1, 5, 16.

which

which lives in us, a Rebel againſt God, that the *New Adam*, namely *Jeſus Chriſt*, who walked in the Mortification of his Nature (*x*), *to give us an Example*, may be quickned and revive in us.

§. 37. What Worm of Earth is ſo bold as to prefer it ſelf to *Jeſus Chriſt*, deſiring to enter into his Glory without Suffering and without Penitence, ſince he (*y*) muſt enter into his Glory by Suffering, tho' he never Sinned? Is it not written in the Goſpel (*z*), that *He who went to the Marriage-Feaſt not having the Wedding Garment, was condemned* by the Maſter, who ſaid, *bind him Hand and Foot, and caſt him into outer Darkneſs*? How ſhould not this Sentence be pronounced againſt the Man, who being cloath'd with the Sackcloth of his Corruption, would enter into the Kingdom of Heaven without putting off this old Corruption, nay while his Heart continues ſtill wedded to it, to love and gratify it? One muſt be certainly loſt to all good Senſe, who does not believe that this will be the Caſe of all thoſe who preſume to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, before they have overcome and trampled upon this woful Corruption which Sin hath introduced into Humane Nature (*). They will infallibly be caſt out as Unworthy, and confin'd to the Darkneſs of Death, in which they were willing to Live and Die; for this is the part which they have choſen, tho' indeed with their Mouth they affirmed, that they would be ſaved by the Merits of *Jeſus Chriſt*; (*a*) yet this will not hinder their Eternal Damnation: for this is but to mock at the Merits of *Jeſus Chriſt*; while Men will be applying them to themſelves, without endeavouring to imitate them, after he hath told them, (*b*) that *they muſt follow him*: and again, (*c*) that *all theſe things he hath done to give us an Example*. Can this be underſtood ſo as if corrupt Man may continue to live in his Corruption, and yet hope for Salvation at his Death? He muſt be altogether Stupid that believes it, ſeeing if this were true, the whole Scripture muſt be falſe; for it ſaith, (*d*) that *there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it any thing that's unclean, or that worketh Abomination*: and elſewhere (*e*), that *neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Thieves, nor Drunkards, &c. ſhall inherit the Kingdom of Heaven*; which belongs only to (*f*) *the little Children*, and not to (*g*) the ſtinking Goats, who follow the Corruption

(x) 1 *Pet.* iv. 1, 2. (y) *Luke* xxiv. 26. (z) *Matth.* xxii. 12. (*) *Luke* xii. 45, 46. (a) *Chap.* xiii. 25, 30. (b) *Jo.* xii. 26. *Ch.* xxi. 19. (c) *Ch.* xiii. 15. (d) *Rev.* xxi. 27. (e) 1 *Cor.* vi. 9, 10. (f) *Matth.* 19. 14. (g) *Ch.* xxv. 32.

of

of their Natures, and by this Means ceaſe to be Children of God, and become Children of Wrath: yet with all this, they would be ſaved by the Merits of *Jeſus Chriſt*, tho' God will not admit any into his Kingdom, but only ſuch as are cloath'd with *the Spirit of Chriſt*, as the Scripture affirmeth (*h*). But theſe fooliſh Men have formed to themſelves very perverſe and imaginary Idea's to damn Men, making them to live at Eaſe in their Corruption, under a falſe Hope of Salvation. Some ill Man thro' the Devil's Incitement hath invented this miſerable Gloſs upon the Merits of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and others have followed it, becauſe this Opinion doth gratifie and flatter corrupt Nature; but in the end cauſeth it to deſcend ſoftly as 'twere in Coach into Hell.

§. 38. By this means great Numbers walk pleaſantly in the broad way, until they come to the Gates of Death, where they ſhall ſee (though too late) that Men have deceived them; and that none of the *Merits* of *Jeſus Chriſt* ſhall be applied to them, or to any but thoſe who have imitated and followed him to the utmoſt of their Power. Then will it be too late to go to ſeek the Truth, ſeeing theſe corrupt Perſons will find themſelves ſhut out with the fooliſh Virgins in the Goſpel (*i*), who expected to have admittance to the Bridegroom with the wiſe Virgins. But it will be ſaid to them, *I know you not*; even tho' they carry in the Hand of their Underſtanding the Lamp of Hope in the Merits of *Chriſt*. It will be ſaid to them, "*Go and buy the Oyl* of Charity, or *the Love of God*, from "thoſe Merchants who have ſold you Lies for Truths. Ye "ſhould have been more wiſe, and have made Proviſion of this "Oil of *the Love of God*, which would have enlightned you "until ye had entred into the Marriage-Feaſt. Ye ought not "to have been lull'd aſleep in the Way by Mens Diſcourſes "(*k*), who have promis'd you Salvation, but could not give "it; foraſmuch as 'tis written (*l*), that *all Men are Liars*. Ye "ſhould have gone (*m*) to ask Counſel of the Evangelical Law, "where ye would have found the Truth, ſince *Chriſt* him-"ſelf told you (*n*), *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*; (*o*) "*Whoſoever entreth in by me ſhall be ſaved.* Ye ought not to liſten to theſe Interpreters and Inventers of new Doctrines, which are manifeſtly ſhocking to the Doctrine of the Goſpel; for this ſpeaketh of nothing ſo much as of (*p*) *denying one's*

(h) *Rom.* viii. 9. (i) *Matth.* xxv. 7, 12. (k) 2 *Pet.* ii. 19. (l) *Pſalm* cxvi. 11. (m) *Iſa.* viii. 20. (n) *Jo.* xiv. 6. (o) *Ch.* 10. 9. (p) *Matth.* xvi. 24.

ſelf,

ſelf, of taking up and bearing the Croſs; (q) *of Faſting*, (r) *of Watching, and* (ſ) *of doing Penance:* Whenas theſe ſenſual Men teach a Doctrine that's altogether looſe and licentious, according to the Motions of corrupt Nature; cauſing People to live at their Eaſe without ſuffering any thing, to take great care of their Health, and to ſatisfie the Appetites of Nature: though on the other hand the Scripture doth warn us, (t) *that he who ſaves his Life ſhall loſe it; and that he who loſeth his Life for the love of God, ſhall find it.* Hereby 'tis eaſy to diſcover that theſe new Doctrines are Antichriſtian, and that it is the Spirit of Antichriſt which reigns at this time, and that the Truth of God and the Spirit of *Chriſt* are utterly contemned and rejected, nay, are become a Scandal even to the Chriſtians, who deſpiſe and reproach the Lowlineſs and Poverty of *Chriſt Jeſus*; that ſo they may praiſe and eſteem the Riches, Honors and Pleaſures of this World more than (u) *this Evangelical Pearl of great Price, to purchaſe which, a Man ſhould ſell and forſake all that he hath.* But, alas! the blindneſs of Men is ſo great, that they don't ſee even that which is before their Eyes. The vain and frivolous Diſcourſes which are made to them (w) they take for Truths, and ſo build their Salvation upon falſe Suppoſitions, as that they ſhall be ſaved thro' the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, tho' at the ſame time they find themſelves enclin'd to all ſorts of Evil, and void of all Good, following the Motions of their corrupt Natures, which hurry them on to all manner of Sin and Vice. Some of *Calvin*'s Reformation have this expreſly affirmed in their Catechiſm, where 'tis ſaid, that they ſhall be ſaved by pure Grace, notwithſtanding their great Wickedneſs and Impenitence, ſeeing *Jeſus Chriſt* hath ſatisfied for them. As if *Chriſt* were an Abettor and Defender of Sin and Corruption, and would be more merciful than God himſelf to ſave the Malice of thoſe Evil-doers: tho' indeed *Chriſt* is but (x) One with his Eternal Father, and will never ſave but the Works of his own Hands, and (y) them who are his true Children.

§. 39. For this Reaſon *Jeſus Chriſt* ſaid (z), *Suffer the little Children to come unto me, for of ſuch is the Kingdom of Heaven*; Not of the Children of Wrath and Perdition, as are thoſe Perſons who are enclin'd to all manner of Evil, and deſire to live

(q) *Chap.* 9. 15, 17, 21. *Acts* xiii. 3. *Ch.* xiv. 23. 2 *Cor.* xi. 27. (r) *Mar.* xiii. 37. (ſ) *Matth.* 4. 17. *Acts* ii. 38. (t) *Matth.* xvi. 25. (u) *Matth.* xiii. 46. (w) 2 *Tim.* iv. 3, 4. (x) *Jo.* x. 30. (y) 2 *Cor.* vi. 17, 18. (z) *Matth.* xix. 14.

and

and die in it. These can never put on *Jesus Christ* (z) if they have not first put off this Garment of Perdition, wherewith Sin hath cloathed them: Since it is certain (a), that *Christ* himself did not enter into his Father's Kingdom without having put on this wedding Garment of his LOVE, which he had received from him in his State of Innocence: and God will never know any Person that is not cloath'd with this Robe of Innocence which he had given to Man when he created him, no not his well-beloved Son *Jesus Christ*, if he would have entred into his Kingdom without being covered and cloath'd with his LOVE. For if *Jesus Christ* had turned his Affections towards himself, or the Creatures, during the time that he was cloathed with our Flesh, doubtless he should not have entred into the Kingdom of Heaven. But *Jesus Christ* (b) having constantly resisted and overcome this Flesh, that he might always continue stedfast (c) in *the Love of his Father and his God*; he was own'd and declar'd (d) to be his well-beloved Son, whereas if he had not been cloath'd with this Robe of the *Love of God*, he had been cast out from his Presence, (e) like as all those shall be rejected who at Death shall be found filled with their *Self-Love*: to them it shall be said (f), *Depart from me; for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no Meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no Drink.* Now God can never Hunger or Thirst, but (g) after our LOVE, after having created Man *solely* to be *loved* by him: And when this Man hath not corresponded with the *Designs of God*, then he driveth him away, as being ungrateful and unworthy. How therefore should not he drive out these ill Men, who say, *they will be saved, tho' they continue enclin'd to all sorts of Evil?* Again, if the Merits of *Jesus Christ* could not save himself if so be that he had been out of the *Love of God*, how should these Persons be saved, who say themselves, that they are enclin'd to all manner of Evil?

§. 40. I certainly see (*Dear Children of God*) that all Men wander and lose their Way (h), so soon as they forsake the Essential Truth of God: and that now it may be said (i), *that all Flesh hath corrupted its way.* Therefore you ought not to amuse your selves any more with the discourses of Men, of what Name or of what Religion soever they may be:

(z) *Eph.* iv. 22, 24. (a) *Jo.* viii. 29. *Ch.* xvii. 4, 5. (b) *Rev.* iii. 21. (c) *Jo.* xv. 10. (d) *Rom.* i. 4. and *Phil.* ii. 8, 9. (e) *Matth.* xxii. 12. (f) *Ch.* xxv. 41, 42. (g) *Prov.* xxiii. 26. *Cant.* iv. 10. *Jo.* xix. 28. (h) *Jo.* xiv. 35. (i) *Gen.* vi. 12. *Pſ.* xiv. 2.

settle

ſettle and eſtabliſh your ſelves only upon the Eſſential Truths of God, which ſhall never deceive you. Believe it always to be an infallible Truth (*k*), THAT MAN WAS NEVER CREATED OF GOD FOR ANY OTHER END BUT TO LOVE HIM. Secondly, Be ye firmly perſuaded (*l*) THAT THERE's NO OTHER GOOD BUT GOD ONLY. And Thirdly (*m*), THAT NOTHING BUT WHAT IS EVIL PROCEEDETH FROM MAN. And upon theſe three Foundations or Corner-Stones build confidently the Edifice of your Salvation; but not upon the empty Diſcourſes of Men, that have but weak Imaginations proceeding from their corrupt Minds, which are fit for nothing but to do Evil.

§. 41. Do not follow them, I ſay, even though they give out that their Aſſertions are founded upon the Scriptures (*n*), for they don't indeed underſtand the Senſe of them, applying to one time that which belongs to another; as when they ſay, (*o*) *that God could do with Men, as the Potter can with his Clay; namely, make one Veſſel unto Honor, and another unto Diſhonor,* Which is true of the time when God created Man; he could make him either Free or Confined, either like to himſelf, or like the Elements or Beaſts, without Man's having Reaſon to ask God, *Why haſt thou made me thus?* Seeing it was abſolutely in God's Power to create inſtead of Man any other Creature more or leſs perfect, as ſeem'd good to him; nothing being able to withſtand him. But ſince he hath been pleaſed to give unto Man a Free-will, or (*p*) a full Liberty to uſe his Will, God cannot retract (*q*) what he hath once thought fit to do, neither will he ever retract it. He did indeed create Man without himſelf, but (*r*) he cannot, and will not ſave him without himſelf. This is not for want of Power, but becauſe of his Holy and Eternal Will which never changeth. But blind Men which know not the Truths of God, imagine that he can do Good or Ill to Men without their Conſent; but herein (*s*) they deceive themſelves; for (as hath been ſaid) tho' he hath created us without ourſelves, yet he cannot ſave us without ourſelves; becauſe he would not have this Power over a Creature which he was pleaſed to make in his own

(k) *Matth.* xxii. 37. (l) *Matth.* xix. 17. (m) *Job* xv. 14, 15, 16. (n) 1 *Cor.* ii. 14. (o) *Rom.* ix. 21. (p) *Eccleſius.* xv. 14. (q) *Rom.* xi. 29. (r) *Matth.* xxiii. 37. (s) *Ezek.* xviii. 25, 30.

Likeneſs (*t*). He hath been, is, and always will be pleaſed to have this his Creature free, whatſoever it ſhall do. This is what Men have not fully underſtood hitherto, becauſe the Holy Spirit (*u*) promiſed by *Jeſus Chriſt*, was not yet ſent to teach them all Truth.

§. 42. 'Tis true, honeſt and well-meaning Men have at all times received of the Holy Spirit ſome neceſſary Lights for their Salvation: but they have not always had the Grace to know (*w*) *all Truth*. The ancient Prophets did receive the Light of the Holy Ghoſt as to what they have declared from God, tho' yet they fail'd in ſeveral things, as may be ſeen in the Old Teſtament (*x*) that ſome were chaſtiſed by God for having diſobeyed him. And even the Apoſtles, tho' they received the Holy Ghoſt at Pentecoſt, did not for all that underſtand all Truth; ſeeing they diſputed among themſelves (*y*) whether it was fit to Circumciſe or not; and had ſeveral other Differences (*z*) which occaſion'd ſome of 'em to ſeparate one from another. Nay they ſaid of themſelves (*a*), *we know in part, and we propheſie in part, but when that which is perfect* (the fulneſs of time) *is come, then we ſhall know and propheſie in full perfection*. So that the Holy Spirit which was promiſed to come and teach us all Truth, hath not appeared till now that he begins to diſcover himſelf in teaching all Truth. The Children of God then ſhould lift up their Heads, give an attentive Ear, and open their Underſtandings to ſee and hear what *Truth* is, by withdrawing from all the Deceit and Falſhood of Men who have err'd in all kinds of Religions: for tho' ſome have preach'd the Goſpel (b) and publiſhed holy Things, yet they have all continued to live according to the motions of their corrupt Nature. Thus, though the *Mennoniſts* ſay, *that they are Regenerated Perſons*; yet in Effect they are more Carnal, Senſual and Covetous than the other Religions. And tho' the *Reformed* would be thought to be *the Elect of God*, yet they live and die obeying the Motions of their corrupt Nature. Again, tho' the *Lutherans* call themſelves *Evangelical*, yet their Manners and Practices are quite contrary to the Evangelical Doctrine. So that all Chriſtendom at preſent conſiſts only in feign'd and ſtudied Words, that all may appear more honorable before Men; tho'

(*t*) *Pſalm* 110. 3. *Rev.* xxii. 17. *Jo.* v. 40. (*u*) *Jo.* xvi. 13. (*w*) *Dan.* xii. 9. (*x*) 1 *K.* xiii. 15. 25. *Numb.* xxvii. 14. (*y*) *Acts* xv. 1. (*z*) *Acts* xi. 3. *and* xv. 39. *Gal.* i. 11. 14. (*a*) 1 *Cor.* xiii. 9, 10. (*b*) *Matth.* vii. 22.

all

all theſe Diſcourſes are indeed but Abominations before God, who will never ſave any but thoſe *who ſhall be converted and become as little Children* in the ſimplicity of the Goſpel.

§. 43. 'Tis only to ſuch (*c*) that *the Kingdom of Heaven doth belong*, and not to thoſe who are not willing to be converted, and yet would be ſaved by the Merits of *Jeſus Chriſt*. But they're mightily miſtaken; ſince nothing ſhall be ſaved (*d*) but *the Work of God*. The Body and Soul which God hath given us ſhall be ſaved, but not the corruption with which this Body and this Soul have been covered ſince Sin entred into them (*e*). This Corruption will paſs away from him who hath hated and overcome it: both the Soul and the Internal Body which God hath made, ſhall be happy to all Eternity, if during this miſerable Life, the Man hath ſubdued his Corruption, being as a little Child, renewed in the Spirit of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

§. 44. This cannot be done but by the means (*f*) of keeping the *Evangelical Law*, which God will give Grace to obſerve in theſe laſt times (*g*) to all thoſe who ſeek and deſire it. This conſideration hath moved me to write this Treatiſe of the RENOVATION OF THE EVANGELICAL SPIRIT, which will fully deduce the Method of keeping this Law, unto all thoſe that are willing to practiſe it, But before I enlarge farther upon this Practice; I have found it neceſſary to deſcribe the Miſery into which Man is fal'n by Sin; (*h*) how he is become dull and ſtupid in Spirit, Ignorant, Inconſtant, and Agitated with all ſorts of vicious Paſſions, being leſs prudent in his Conduct than a Beaſt: Tho' he thinketh himſelf very wiſe, yet he is altogether fill'd with Folly before God. Which Men indeed are ignorant of, becauſe they know not themſelves, and likewiſe becauſe they flatter one another, accounting oftentimes their Fooliſhneſs to be Wiſdom. This is what I was willing to ſhew by the preſent *Treatiſe*, which ſpeaks of no other Thing (in the firſt Part) but of the miſerable State unto which Man hath been reduced by Sin, that knowing his Miſery he may endeavour to get rid of it, by embracing an *Evangelical Life*, which is the only means of arriving at Salvation: as ye may ſee (*Dear Children of God*) by the

(c) *Matth.* xix. 14. (d) *Rev.* xxi. 5. *Iſa.* lx. 21. (e) *Rev.* xxi. 1. *Rom.* viii. 21, 23. (f) 1 *Pet.* ii. 2. (g) *Jer.* xxxi. 31. *Rev.* xxii. 17. (h) *Rom.* i. 21, 32.

following part of this Book, which is only a Preparative to the *Renovation of the Gospel-Spirit*, which she wisheth you, who loveth the Perfection of your Souls,

A. BOURIGNON.

THE

THE RENOVATION OF The GOSPEL-SPIRIT.

The First Part.

[*That it may appear how neceſſary it is to be* renew'd by the Goſpel-Spirit, *here is diſcover'd the great Corruption of our Nature, which appears in all its Ways, in the Thoughts, Judgment and Opinion that it has of it ſelf, ſtill following its own Will, and the great Deceitfulneſs of the Man's Heart which knows not it ſelf in any thing; but thinks that it loves God, and is vertuous, when it ſeeks only to ſatisfie the Inclinations and Pleaſures of corrupt Nature, to which even the Learned of this Age have accommodated their Doctrine, and perverted the Law of Chriſt, which we ought to obey in mortifying the Fleſh and its Luſts, even though a Man deſired only to leſſen his Damnation; how much more if we deſire to be ſaved by the* RENOVATION OF THE GOSPEL-SPIRIT? *The Reader in peruſing this Letter ought rather to think upon himſelf, than on the Perſon to whom it was occaſionally written: For without doubt every one will find in himſelf the like Corruption as to its Eſſence, and perhaps far greater.*]

My Friend,

§. 1. I Perceive, the Devil diſturbs your Mind by diverſe Temptations, to which you give too eaſie Entrance, becauſe you are ignorant of his Devices and of the great Corruption of your NATURE. You think you do well, when you do very ill. And if you continue thus to follow your own Will, it is to be feared, the Devil will hurry you on to many Misfortunes.

§. 2. God has ſo favorably provided for you here, both as to Soul and Body, that you could no where have better Conveniencies both for your temporal and ſpiritual Infirmities; and yet inſtead of bleſſing God continually for this, you are diſpleas'd with many Things, and cannot well tell your ſelf what you would be at. For when you was at *Hamburgh*, you wiſh'd ſo earneſtly to be here, that you would have been willing to lie in a Stable, if there had been no other Accommodation for you. And now when you have here a very good Chamber, you are not ſatisfied with it, but would have another: And though this other is furniſhed with all Conveniencies for an aged or infirm Perſon, with a Stove for the Winter, and is the Ground-Floor, ſo that there is no need of going up or down Stairs for any thing you want; yet before you entred into it you ſaid, The Windows muſt be made higher, that you might breath the more freely, though the Room is abundantly high, and the Proſpect ſufficient, anſwerable to the Largeneſs of the Place. So that without doubt you will ſtill find ſome other thing to complain of, ſince you ſeek to ſatisfie *corrupt Nature*, which of it ſelf is inſolent, inſatiable, never content nor ſatisfied, deſiring always what it has not, and never pleaſed even with the abundance which it hath. This makes you ſtill deſire what you have not, though formerly you thought you could be contented with Bread and Beer, provided you were living in the Society of good People. And now you are in a quiet Place, with Perſons of Vertue and Integrity, who do not treat you as one of the Poor of the Hoſpital, but as their Brother, doing you all manner of Kindneſs and Service, you are not ſatisfied, but would ſtill have more Service and Conveniencies; and you murmur if they are not with you Night and Day, doing you ſuch Services, as may gratifie your Corruption and ſenſual Appetites. For otherwiſe our Brethren ſerve you in all Things neceſſary for your Infirmity, which is not ſo great as to oblige them to watch with you by Night, or to be always by you. For your Diſeaſe lies rather in your Imagination (which Satan diſturbs that he may vex us) than in any Feveriſhneſs, or other Malady purely natural.

§. 3. But you do not perceive this, becauſe of the blindneſs of your ſelf-love, which believes that it deſerves all the Eaſe and Service which corrupt Nature covets, and thinks it is wrong'd, if it get not the beſt and moſt pleaſant Things in Nature: whereas this Corruption ought to reckon it ſelf unworthy of a Crumb of Bread, or a Glaſs of Beer: ſince by its Sins it is become God's Enemy, and has ſo often deſpiſed his Commandments: therefore it deſerves not to taſte the good

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and pleaſant Things, which God created for his Children only; and not for Rebels, as all thoſe are who chuſe to follow the Motions of their CORRUPT NATURE as much as poſſible. Therefore you ought not only to be ſatisfied with what is done and given to you here, but even to reckon your ſelf very happy to be lodged in ſuch a Place, ſince you acknowledge that you was very hardly uſed by your neareſt Relations, who would let you have nothing without Mony, and not very honeſtly neither.

§. 4. How ſtrange is your Ingratitude! who will not be pleaſed with the Services which our Brethren render you out of Charity, without being obliged to it; for they want neither your Mony nor your Perſon; for all of us have abundance of this World's Goods, wherewith to procure the Service of others, if Chriſt had not told us (a), *that he came not to be ſerved, but to ſerve*; and they are deſirous, as much as is poſſible, to labor to imitate ſuch a Maſter, who has pointed out to them the ſervile way of Humility and Lowlineſs.

§. 5. But you ſeem to contemn all theſe Things, coveting Wealth, and being deſirous to ſpend the little Mony you have in getting others to ſerve and attend you. This is quite contrary to Chriſtian Perfection, which is contented with what is purely neceſſary, and even reckons it ſelf unworthy of that. But you imagine you deſerve great Things; becauſe Men eſteem you Virtuous, tho' really you are not ſo; for if you had one grain of Humility of Heart, you would judge your ſelf unworthy of the leaſt Service that our Brethren do you; nay, even tho' it were done you by the meaneſt Perſon in the World. But becauſe you do not know wherein true Vertue conſiſts, you think you are Humble, while you eſteem your ſelf worthy of all Accommodations and Services; and you think it Prudence, to deſire to be well treated and provided for.

§. 6. Therefore you ſay, *That Maids muſt be had to do the meaner Offices, ſince theſe do not become Men:* As if naturally Men had not ſo much Strength as Women; though indeed Men have more robuſt Bodies than they. But Pride will not ſuffer Men to do mean and ſervile Offices, though Jeſus Chriſt, that true Man, ſerved his Parents, and did the mean Offices of the Houſe till he was Thirty Years of Age; for the Scripture ſpeaks nothing of him until this Age, except, *That he was ſubject to his Parents.* Now, a truly obedient Son will not let his Father or Mother waſh the Diſhes, clean

(a) *Matth.* xx 28.

the Houſe, or do any other mean and ſervile Work, while he is preſent. For this would be great Rudeneſs, (ſuch as could not be in Jeſus Chriſt) if a Son ſhould make his Father and Mother ſerve him: Whence it appears, that Chriſt did not diſdain all his Life-time to do mean and ſervile Offices.

§. 7. But becauſe you are deſirous of the Eaſe and Conveniencies of corrupt Nature, you think it were fitter that I ſhould take in Maids to ſerve us. As if through Ignorance I toil'd and labour'd in vain, and wanted Foreſight to provide for the Houſhold Affairs; and you do not conſider, that I have as much Underſtanding and Foreſight as you, to judge what is neceſſary for me. I having more Age and Experience in Nature, beſides that, God has beſtow'd on me his Divine Light, to which you owe more Deference, than to the Sentiments of corrupt Nature, which regards not eternal Things more than a Beaſt does; and it is enough to it that it have its Eaſe and Conveniencies, let other Things go as they will.

§. 8. But he who deſires to become a Chriſtian is touch'd with nothing but wat concerns the Perfection of his Soul; he values and eſteems all the Means that lead to it, and is little concern'd, whether any Office he does be mean or honorable, provided it be pleaſing to God. But the mere natural Man does all like a Beaſt, who being put into a Meadow, ſeeks after the beſt Graſs or Paſture. The natural Man does juſt the ſame, when he changes his Place; he applies himſelf to conſider if he is well lodged and treated; if he has a good Bed, and is well accommodated for every thing; if he has Meat and Drink that pleaſes his Taſte, *&c.* Now it concerns you, my Friend, to conſider, whether you will follow the Brutal part, or the Supream part of your Soul, which ought to aim only at Things Eternal, for which it was created, and not to ſeek to live at its Eaſe in this World. On the contrary, it is ſent into this World to endure and ſuffer, for accompliſhing the Penitence which God has enjoin'd it for its Sins. For this Reaſon the Chriſtian Soul is always content with mere Neceſſaries, and will not (even though it could) taſte the Delights of this preſent Life, that it may wait for more Divine Pleaſures in the other Life to all Eternity.

§. 9. Can I believe, my Friend, that you aim at this bleſs'd Eternity, when I ſee, that inſtead of *ſeeking the Kingdom of Heaven*, as Chriſt adviſeth us, promiſing, that *all other things ſhall be given us*, you ſeek all thoſe other things, without relying on the Promiſes of Jeſus Chriſt, nor the Promiſes that charitable Perſons have made you, who are able to help you? But you are diſquieted and troubled with Care

about

about your Food and Health, fearing to be in Want in the midſt of the Abundance in which you are; and being deſirous to run from one Place to another to ſeek out for better Accommodations. Hence you ask me, *If I would cauſe you to be moved to* Amſterdam, *with all your Things, where you intend to live in a Chamber alone; and that though you ſhould live there upon Bread and Water, you would be content?* But you do not perceive, that theſe are all Temptations of the Devil, who would drive you into Extremities. For how could you be content to live there alone, ſince you ſeem to be almoſt deſpairing in your preſent Solitude, though our Brother attends you at leaſt four times a Day to ſerve and feed you? And how would you be pleaſed with Bread and Water, ſince here you are not pleaſed with good wholſome Victuals, and good Wine and Beer, which is never denied you? And how would you be better ſerv'd with a Worldly Woman, who no doubt would fool you, and perhaps rob you of what you have, and turn you out and deſpiſe you, when you had nothing more to give her: Seeing you are not content with the charitable Service which a good and honeſt Man does you?

§. 10. By all theſe Circumſtances you may clearly perceive, that it is the Devil that ſeduces you, that he may ruine both your Body and Soul. You may learn by this alſo to underſtand the Corruption of your Nature, which is inconſtant, will not ſuffer any thing, ſtill covets what it has not, and is diſpleas'd and diſcontented without any Ground; tho' I have ſo often declared in my Writings, *That there needs no more to bring one to Damnation, than ſimply to follow his corrupt Nature*, which is an infallible Truth. For, as I think, all Chriſtians believe, that all the Poſterity of *Adam* are born *Children of Wrath and Perdition*. Now if they live in this State, then aſſuredly they die in it. For can they be ſaved, if they ſtill abide in this State of Damnation in which they are born?

§. 11. I do not think that you embrace that Satanical Doctrine, which teaches, that Souls, which are in a State of Damnation from their Birth, ſhall be ſaved thro' the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, tho' they are not born again into his Spirit; for this is moſt falſe. For never any ſhall partake of the Merits of Chriſt, but they who are his Diſciples; and none *can be the Diſciples of Chriſt, but he that takes up his Croſs and follows him* (*b*): But the natural Man declines to ſuffer, and ſeeks rather to have the beſt and fineſt of every thing for

(b) *Matth.* x. 38.

his

his Uſe. And though Jeſus Chriſt has ſaid to all Chriſtians, *Be ye Followers of me, and take the loweſt Place* ‡; yet Nature rejects this Doctrine, will not imitate Chriſt in any thing, nor take the loweſt Place, but loves rather to follow its own Inclinations, and to have the firſt Place, and yet withal imagines, that it has a Share in the Merits of Chriſt, though in the whole Courſe of its Life it acts contrary to his Life and Doctrine.

§. 12. In which Men are greatly deceived; for Chriſt has merited nothing for thoſe who will not imitate and follow him. And tho' on his part he died for all Men, without excepting one more than another, or that he died to ſave *Peter*, excluding *John* (as ſome do aſſert this damnable Predeſtination); yet he moſt aſſuredly died for all thoſe who voluntarily chuſe to become his Diſciples; and he certainly rejects all thoſe who diſdain to imitate and follow him, deſiring to be ſaved by his Merits only. This confutes all thoſe wretched Predeſtinarians, who being deſirous to enjoy Two Paradiſes, make Men believe falſly, that they ſhall be ſaved by the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, after they have follow'd in this World the Bent of their corrupt Nature, which being the Enemy of God and of Chriſt, cannot hope in his Merits. And ſuch live and die Enemies of our Saviour's Sufferings; for they will not embrace and follow them, but avoid them as much as they can, inſtead of *embracing or taking up the Croſs* willingly to follow Chriſt; that thus thro' Sufferings they may enter with him into Glory.

§. 13. It is not to be imagin'd that Jeſus would tell Chriſtians, they muſt take up his Croſs of Wood, upon which he was crucified on Mount *Calvary*; for that material Croſs was not yet in Being, when Jeſus Chriſt gave them thoſe Precepts; but he meant the Suffering of Hardſhips and Inconveniencies; of Perſecution and Contempt; of Poverty and Sickneſs, and all ſorts of things that are grievous to the Body or the Mind; telling them, they muſt take all theſe things patiently when they happen, yea even rejoyce in them, and thank God for them, who makes us worthy of the holy Sufferings, which accompanied our Lord Jeſus, even to the laſt Period of his Life.

§. 14. Conſider now, my Friend, whether you be the Diſciple of Jeſus, and if you take up your Croſs to follow him, when you are ſo impatient for a little Indiſpoſition, which in all Appearance you have brought upon your ſelf. For

‡ *Luke* xiv. 10.

I am

I am told, that having ſeen a dead Mouſe in a Soldier's Hand, you were affrighted at it, and trembled like one half dead, and ſaid, That all the Blood of your Body was diſorder'd with the Terror and Fear: Upon which you was ſeiz'd with a Fever, which has not yet left you. Was not this a rare Occaſion of becoming ſick? It may be juſtly ſaid, that you have not Faith in God; and that you have let *corrupt Nature* ſtill rule over you, to which your Reaſon is a Slave. For this Puſillanimity ought to have been tamed and overcome by Reaſon, tho' it had been only with reſpect to this preſent Life. You ought to have done Violence to this Corruption, that it might have been reſtrain'd within due Bounds. Much more ought you to have done Violence to it, *that you might take the Kingdom of Heaven by Force*; for Jeſus Chriſt ſaith, *That the Violent take it by Force* (c).

§. 15. Not that we muſt uſe Arms or Force to obtain the Kingdom of Heaven, for God has given it freely unto us; and he had prepared it for Man before he created him. But this Force and Violence muſt be exerciſed upon our ſelves, that we may ſubdue and overcome the *Corruption of our Nature*, which always oppoſeth it ſelf directly to our eternal Happineſs, ſtopping up the Way that leads to Life by its Inſolencies, and the Diſturbances which it gives the Soul, takes it from walking or flying in that ſtrait Way that leads to Life, of which Chriſt ſays, *That few walk in it*; becauſe Men for the moſt part chuſe rather to periſh in the broad Way, by following the Inclinations of their corrupt Nature, than to be ſaved, by reſiſting their own Wills. This is the common Courſe of the World at preſent, while Men do not ſo much as know the Neceſſity there is of denying their own Will, but live as Beaſts, and follow the Inſtinct of *corrupt Nature*, and withal believe they ſhall come to the Kingdom of Heaven, becauſe of ſome pious Deſires and Motions which God gives them.

§. 16. In which they are greatly deceived; for Hell is paved with good Purpoſes, which were never put in Execution. For truly all good Deſires and good Motions come directly from God, and not from Man, who is become ſo corrupted by Sin, that of himſelf he is not capable of ſo much as one good Thought: And if he finds that he has any, it is God only that excites them in his Soul, that he may try how faithful he will be in that which is good. And when the Soul does not correſpond with the good Thought, which God doth

(c) *Matth.* xi. 12.

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graciouſly give it; it encreaſes its Sins by its Ingratitude, into which it could not fall, if God had not given it thoſe good Deſires.

§. 17. Wherefore a Man flatters himſelf with vain Hopes, when he thinks to be ſaved, becauſe he has had good Purpoſes and Deſires, which aggravate his Sins, when they are not put in Execution. For he who is moved by good Deſires, is more obliged to do Good, than he who is not; otherwiſe he ſlights and deſpiſes the Grace of good Deſires, which God has granted him. Therefore it is ſaid in the Holy Scripture, (d) *He who knows the Father's Will, and does it not, ſhall be beaten with many Stripes*; becauſe he has reſiſted more the Grace of God than he who has not receiv'd thoſe good Deſires and good Purpoſes. Wherefore he who is moved with good Deſires, ought to take heed to them, and labour to find out all fit Means for putting them in Execution, and to avoid all that may hinder him from doing this.

§. 18. It is true, a Man cannot do any Good, being inclin'd to all Evil, and all Good comes from God alone; nevertheleſs, he may reſiſt the Evil which he does himſelf. For the Corruption of human Nature was not made by God, it is Man's own Work, and he ought to have as much Power over his own Work, as a Painter or Artificer hath over the Picture or Figure he has formed. He can break or ſplit it as he pleaſes; for the Matter of it belongs to him as well as the Form. He can throw it into the Fire, or deſtroy it ſome other Way, when it does not pleaſe him. Even ſo may a Man undo his own corrupt Will, when Eternal Good is more pleaſing and acceptable to him than this World's Goods, for which he has an Averſion, when the Soul has diſcovered their Filthineſs, Deformity and Uncertainty: He is vexed to ſee the Work of his Hands ſo deformed and ugly, that he can no longer ſuffer it, nor endure to look upon it. Then indeed a Man does very eaſily deny himſelf, apply himſelf to break and deſtroy this naughty Corruption, to make head againſt it, reſiſt it, bridle it, and at laſt totally to root it out; that by *this Force and Violence he may take the Kingdom of Heaven* (e).

§. 19. And he muſt not pretend to ſay with the ſoft and delicate part of Mankind, (which can't ſuffer any Trouble or Inconvenience) That he has not the Grace of God for overcoming his corrupt Nature. For this is falſe; ſeeing God, when he created Man, gave him a Free-will to do Good or Evil at his Choice; and thereafter Man by Sin loſt the Power of doing

(d) *Luke* xii. 47. (e) *Matth.* xi. 12.

Good

Good, if he receive not ſpecial Grace from God to do it. Now this is always given of God, when he pours into the Soul good Deſires, which are ſo many Calls that God gives on his part, by a particular Grace. And in this Senſe it is ſaid in Holy Writ, that (*f*) *Many are called*: For God excites good Deſires almoſt in all Men, both in the Good and Evil: *But few are choſen*; becauſe there are ſo few who chuſe this ſtrait Way of denying their OWN WILL.

§. 20. Many read the Goſpel, and deſire to be the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, but very few take up Arms and ſet themſelves to reſiſt *their corrupt Nature*, which is the Source of all Evil; and yet without this Reſiſtance none ſhall be ſaved, let them believe or ſay what they will; for we cannot do well, unleſs we ceaſe to do Evil, which is the Off-ſpring of Self-Will. This very few underſtand; hence many periſh in the way of Vertue, for that they have not ſufficiently diſcover'd the abſolute Neceſſity of DYING TO THEMSELVES, that they may live to Jeſus Chriſt. They diſcourſe indeed of Spiritual Things, and have fine Speculations about Vertue; they love to ſpeak of them, but they come not up to the main Point, which is to break their own Will, that hindreth all kind of true Vertue. Hence it is that ſo many die in their Apprentice-ſhip. Of ſuch the Scripture ſpeaks, when it ſays, (*g*) *Theſe are ſilly Women, ever Learning, and never able to come to the Knowledge of the Truth.* Indeed they read the Bible, and have much of it by Heart; they ſing Pſalms, make long Prayers, obſerve the appointed Faſts and Vigils: They keep the Sabbath, go to Church, give out of their abundance to the Poor, and for other pious Uſes: But in the mean time they cannot deny their OWN WILL, nor reſtrain their CORRUPT NATURE.

§. 21. Nevertheleſs, this is the Eſſence of all true Vertue, without which none can be ſaved, for this Self-denial is the one thing neceſſary, of which Jeſus Chriſt ſpoke to *Martha*, the Siſter of *Lazarus*, ſaying, (*h*) Mary *hath choſen the better Part, which ſhall not be taken from her*; to ſhew that *Mary* had choſen the moſt perfect Way, by denying her ſelf, forſaking all that ſhe had loved in this World, to follow Chriſt. She had already made a Divorce inwardly with Fleſh and Blood, the Pleaſures and Pomps of the World, deſpiſing the Pleaſures of Taſte, and all that might give any Satisfaction to corrupt Nature; that ſhe might aſpire and aim only after Eternal Things: And to facilitate this, ſhe forſakes from

(f) *Matt.* xx. 26. (g) 2 *Tim.* iii. 16. (h) *Luke* x. 42.

that

that Time the Converſation of Men, her Country, her Wealth and Kindred, and retires to the Deſert, and inſtead of a Houſe or Palace, contents her ſelf with the Cave of a Rock, that thus in every thing ſhe might reſiſt the Deſires of her *corrupt Nature*.

§. 22. And for this only Reaſon Jeſus Chriſt ſays, *That ſhe had choſen the better Part*, which neither Devils nor Men could take from her: For the Devil has no hold upon Man's *Denying of his own Will*. He may indeed inſinuate himſelf into external good Works, and likewiſe into the good Deſires a Man has, that he may tempt him to vain Glory, or make him exceed in ſomething; but in the Denial of one's Will, there is nothing but good Order and Humility: For God himſelf governs the Soul that denies it ſelf, and reſigns it ſelf to the Conduct of his Holy Spirit, And this is a Treaſure that Thieves cannot ſteal, Worms do not eat, nor Ruſt corrupt: For all that God doth is permanent, and cannot be evil or imperfect. So that this way of Self-denial may be called, *The true and ſure Way to Paradiſe*; ſo that there is no need of ſeeking out ſo many Ways, Means and By-paths, as Men teach now-a-days, for obtaining Salvation; which Means do often turn Men out of the Way of Happineſs, inſtead of guiding them directly thither. For how many are there, who think they are in the Way of Salvation, becauſe they go to Church to hear a Lecture or Sermon, or becauſe they pray, faſt, or give Alms to the Poor? Though all this avails nothing, if it do not tend to the Renouncing of the Self-will of Man, which is perverted and corrupted by Sin, and doth, and will ſtill reſiſt the Deſigns of God, if it is not withſtood and contradicted in every thing. Wherefore this Denial of our Self-will is the *one Thing neceſſary*; and he who embraces this, chuſes the better part, that ſhall not be taken from him. For wicked Men cannot hinder a Man from renouncing his own Will; as they may hinder Prayers, Faſting, Alms-giving, or ſome external good Works, which may be ſtollen away by Vain-glory or Self-conceit.

§. 23. Wherefore I counſel you, my Friend, as I do all well-meaning Souls, to chuſe this better part, which our Lord Jeſus approved in *Mary Magdalen*; by reſiſting your own Will, ſubjecting it in all Things to the Will of God, who will aſſuredly govern it, if you reſign it to his Power, He will do it either immediately in you, or mediately by me. But ſo long as you will needs follow *your own Will*, and the Motions of *corrupt Nature*, the Holy Spirit can never govern you, and you are in hazard of throwing your ſelf into many Evils.

§. 24.

§. 24. For what Good can proceed from a Will that is the Enemy of God, as are the Wills of all Men who live according to corrupt Nature? They bring forth nothing but Evil and Sin. Ah! what elſe can a depraved Will do, but continually offend its God, whoſe Enemy it is. Truly, as none can hope for Friendſhip, or any good Office from his ſworn Enemy, ſo we muſt not imagine, that the Self-will of Man will ſeek to pleaſe God, or do his Will; ſeeing it loves it ſelf only, ſeeking its own Satisfaction and Conveniencies, reſpecting Time only, and neglecting Eternity. And by theſe Means *Self-will* drives Man's Soul into everlaſting Deſtruction.

§. 25. For it is eaſie to conceive, that God having created Man to be loved by him, or to take his Delight with him, God neither can nor ought to love him, when he ſees that he turns away his Affections from his God, to love himſelf, and what elſe he delights in, in this wretched World. This turning away of his Affections is the Eſſence of all Sin, whatever other Name may be given to it. For in the Beginning, when Man was created, God demanded nothing of him but his Love, which was the End for which he created him. Now he who loves himſelf, and follows his own Will, acts directly againſt the *Deſigns of God*; and he damns himſelf, by withdrawing his Affections from the Fountain of all Good, to place them in the Source of all Evil, which is the Corruption of Man. Whence it may be concluded, that all thoſe who follow their own Wills, damn themſelves by continually offending God, and deſpiſing the Purpoſe he had concerning Man when he created him; wilfully caſting off his Friendſhip, for the Love of periſhing Things, when they are capable of loving ſo good and ſo powerful a God.

§. 26. I think, my Friend, you have never underſtood thoſe Truths, and have hitherto followed your Self-will, without thinking that you did Evil: Yea, you rather imagined you were wiſe and very fit to govern your ſelf, though truly you are not ſo. You have indeed ſome good Deſires, which God excites in your Soul: But you have never put in Practice the Denial of your ſelf, but have ſtill reckon'd it Prudence to look to your Conveniencies, your Honor and Profit; which you have valued too much, and withal have been too ſolicitous for your Health. Now all theſe Things ariſe from the Love and Eſteem you have for your ſelf, while you think you deſerve every thing. And that under ſuch a Cover of Reaſon and Piety, that you perceive it not your ſelf, but believe you are vertuous and guided by a good Spirit, whilſt in the

the mean time you are far from it. On the contrary, I obſerve that you are led on all your Ways by the Devil and corrupt Nature.

§. 27. It is then with great Reaſon ſaid in the Holy Scripture, (i) *That the Heart of Man is deceitful above all things:* For in effect we ſee almoſt all Men ſeduced by their own Thoughts; they are mutable, inconſtant, not knowing what they would be at, and when they think they do beſt, it is then they do worſt. So ſtrangely does Man's Heart deceive him! So that there remains nothing ſound in all the Corruption, that Sin has brought upon the Body and Mind of Man, who truly has great Reaſon to diſtruſt himſelf, inſtead of leaning to his own Underſtanding, which is good for nothing but to betray him into many Evils.

§. 28. For my own part, I durſt never follow my own Judgment in any thing; becauſe I know it was corrupt, fooliſh and ignorant, as is all the Poſterity of *Adam* ſince the Fall: For I found my ſelf often deceived by my own Judgment, and miſled by my own Thoughts; which made me do many things of which I repented afterwards. Therefore I hearken no longer to my own Thoughts, nor to the Deſires of my own Heart: But I reject all theſe as impertinent, even though my own will have a Cover of Reaſon, Piety or Vertue. I am jealous of all this, till the Spirit of God makes me to know, that my Deſires come from him, and till he direct me to the right Way of bringing them to effect. For otherwiſe I ſtop in the midſt even of many good Deſires, chuſing ſtill rather to forbear than to do Evil: For this is a ſure Rule to me, *That Man's own will inclines always to Evil, and never to Good.* And ſince my Supream Will has abſolutely determined never to do Evil; I therefore bridle my Self-will, and never permit it to do any thing but that which God approves.

§. 29. But I perceive not, my Friend, that you do thus, nor yet they who are join'd to our Society. I obſerve rather, that you follow your own Wills as much as you can, as if they were govern'd by the Holy Spirit, though truly they are not. You your ſelves may obſerve, that you follow as much as you can your own Wills; and that your Corruption (which ought to be ſubjected in all things to the Will of God) rules even over your Reaſon, which is leſs obedient to the Holy Spirit, than to your Self-will, that bears Sway in all your Actions.

(i) *Jer.* xvii. 9.

S. 33.

§. 30. Wherefore I cannot think you imagine, that you are led by the Holy Spirit, ſeeing no Signs of this do appear: For the Holy Spirit brings ſtill along with him his Gifts, and brings forth his Fruits in the Soul where he dwells. And if he were in yours, he would infallibly bring forth there Joy, Peace, Patience, and the other Fruits which are reckon'd up to be Twelve in the holy Scriptures †, and which do not appear in your Soul. For inſtead of Joy, there is nothing in it but Sadneſs and Anguiſh: And inſtead of Peace, nothing but Trouble, Diſquiet and Diſcontent, impatient of every thing, deſiring to have all after your own Faſhion, and never pleas'd with any thing that is given or done to you. You told us, *You loved Solitude*; and when you are left alone, you are impatient for want of Company. You ſaid, *If you were left Two Nights longer in your firſt Chamber, you ſhould die*; and when I had prepared another for you, you ſaid, *You was not diſpoſed to go to it*; in the mean time you called to the Sentinels of the Caſtle *for Help*, as if we were letting you die for want, and cauſed guide you out of the Caſtle by Two Soldiers like one dying of Deſpair. You trembled with the Change when you came to us, and called for your Bed; and when it was made ready, you ſaid, *A ſick Perſon ought to ſit up as long as he can*, and you would not lie down. The Bed you thought had a Smell, and the Sheets you thought were not white enough. In ſhort, nothing pleaſes you. You diſdain the moſt delicious Meat and Drink, and make an Idol of your Body and your Health, about which your Thoughts are ſtill taken up, inſtead of ſeeing to the Perfection of your Soul. This makes me ſee clearly, that your Soul is not at all guided by the Holy Spirit, and that it does not cheriſh that Joy, Peace and Patience, which he gives infallibly to all the Souls that yield up themſelves unto him.

§. 31. But ſince you will needs govern your ſelf, he leaves you in all theſe Defects, and that juſtly. For the H. Spirit compels no body, neither does he impart his Graces to any but thoſe who ſeek and deſire them, and yield up themſelves wholly unto him. For he would beſtow his Grace to no Purpoſe on thoſe who are not willing to obey his Inſtructions. Therefore we need not wonder that ſo few have Fellowſhip with God, and receive the Wiſdom of his Holy Spirit, ſeeing there are ſo few who thus hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, and fewer who yield up their Wills entirely to his Conduct: For Men for the moſt part love rather to do Evil in

† *Gal.* v.

following their own Wills, than to do Good in following God's Will, which only is good.

§. 32. And ſince God was pleaſed to make Man a Creature altogether free, he lets him act according to his Liberty, which will never be conſtrain'd to do Good, nor to do Evil; ſeeing theſe Two depend upon the Choice of Man himſelf. The good Spirit does indeed give him good Deſires, and Light whereby to diſcern Good from Evil: But this Holy Spirit will never conſtrain the Will of Man, who, if he hearken to his good Motions, and put them in Practice, ſhall thereupon receive continually Encreaſe of Grace. This the Holy Scripture confirms, where it is ſaid, (k) *If ye be faithful in that which is little, I will place you over greater things.*

§. 33. But if a Man reject and neglect good Deſires and Inſpirations, they ſhall be taken from him; as it is ſaid in the Scripture, (l) *Take the Talent from him, and give it to him that hath Ten Talents.* And the Man who received the Talent was ſo far from being happy thereby, that he is condemn'd for this Talent; *Caſt the unprofitable Servant into outer Darkneſs*, becauſe he would not trade with the Talent which had been given him. This is alſo held forth *by the Tree which Jeſus Chriſt curſed, becauſe it bore no Fruit*: To ſhew, that all they who have received Divine Grace, and been moved by good Deſires and Purpoſes, ſhall not be ſaved, but thoſe only who have put thoſe good Deſires in Execution, and have profited by the Graces of the Holy Spirit.

§. 34. This indeed overturns the abſurd Opinion of the Predeſtinarians, who will do nothing, but ſlothfully lean to the Merits of Chriſt. They will be greatly diſappointed at Death, when they find too late, that they have deſpiſed the Doctrine of Chriſt, and, to their Loſs, perverted the whole Meaning of the Holy Scriptures. For what Need was there that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould curſe the Fig-Tree, if it was predeſtinated to a Curſe? And why ſhould the unprofitable Servant have been condemned for putting up his Talent in a Napkin? Seeing Jeſus Chriſt has merited all, Men have no need to labour for any thing. Verily God would be cruel, and the Scripture falſe, if this wretched Predeſtination were true; or that perverſe Opinion, that Men ought to do nothing for working out their Salvation: For the Apoſtle expreſly ſaith (m), *Work out your Salvation with Fear and Trembling.* But to juſtifie the Sloth and Defection of the Chriſtians of this Age, theſe Predeſtinarians have invented ſubtle Arguments, by

(k) *Matth.* xxv. 23. (l) *Matth.* xxv. 28. (m) *Phil.* ii. 12.

which

which Men may be encouraged to live according to their corrupt Nature in all kind of Sins and Abominations, and yet be perſwaded, that they ſhall be ſaved by the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt. And ſuch is the Blindneſs of Men now-a-days, that they perceive not that theſe are the Deceivers of whom the Scripture ſpeaks, when we are bid, (n) *Beware of falſe Prophets, that we be not deceived by them*; and are told, *That they ſhall deceive many.* Men ſuffer their Minds to be blinded by theſe falſe Prophets, who are come in theſe laſt Times, and deceive many, though their Doctrine overturns the whole Scripture, and contradicts the Truth of Jeſus Chriſt, who with an Aſſeveration ſaid to *Nicodemus*, (o) *That unleſs a Man be converted, and become as a little Child, he ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Chriſt then muſt have told a Lye, when he declared theſe things, though he confirmed the Truth of them with a ſolemn Affirmation, or he muſt have talk'd idly: For if it is true that God has predeſtinated one to Damnation, and another to Salvation, what need have they to know, that *they muſt be converted, and become as little Children*, ſince they muſt be damned or ſaved according to the Divine Predeſtination? And to what purpoſe ſhould he affirm, that *they ſhould not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, if he had merited all for them, or if God had determined to ſave them by the ſole Merits of Jeſus Chriſt?

§. 35. Theſe Arguments are ſo convincing, that he muſt be of a very dull Capacity, who cannot comprehend them, and who ſees not that theſe Doctrines are ſeducing, and tend to the Damnation of the Well-meaning, who believe, that they do Honor and Service to Chriſt, by aſcribing to his Merits the Cauſe of their Salvation. And indeed the Salvation of all Men depends upon the Merits of Chriſt, provided theſe Merits be not taken in a perverted Senſe for the End of Salvation, when really they are only the true Means abſolutely neceſſary for the Attainment of Salvation. For if Chriſt had not offered himſelf as Mediator between God and Man, all Mankind had remain'd loſt in the State of Damnation, into which *Adam* ſunk them, he having undone himſelf and all his Poſterity. But Chriſt having Compaſſion on his loſt Brethren, interceeded with God his Father for them, and therefore charged himſelf with their Miſeries, and bore the Pains due to their Sins, that he might teach them by what means they might be deliver'd from this Damnation, and recover the Love of God. And to encourage them to bear this

(n) *Matth.* vii. 12. (o) *John* iii.

heavy Burthen of the Pains due to their Sins, he condeſcended to take it up, and march before them, as a valiant Captain marches at the Head of his Soldiers, that he may encourage them to fight valiantly againſt their Enemies.

§. 36. But if theſe Soldiers were ſo Baſe and Cowardly as to ſit ſtill and live in Softneſs and Eaſe, ſaying, *Our Captain will fight for us, we will let him march alone. It is enough that we know he has Courage, and can bear well all the Fatigues and Hardſhips: This will relieve and ſave us; and having this Hope, let us live in Mirth and Jollity.* Would not a prudent Warrior ſay, that all the Soldiers of that Company ought to be hanged on the firſt Trees they came to, for their Infidelity and brutiſh Cowardice, and Sloth? How much more ſhould a good Chriſtian condemn the Infidelity and Baſeneſs of thoſe who ſay, *That Jeſus Chriſt has ſuffered all for Men, and that they ought not to do any thing to imitate him; That it is enough that he has merited for them, and his Merits will ſave them:* Where they do not diſtinguiſh the End from the Means, nor conſider, that God created Man only to be loved by him, and that Chriſt came to teach us by what means Man may return unto this LOVE of his God, after having ſo baſely loſt it, and placed his Love upon himſelf, or ſome other vile Creature.

§. 37. And theſe Means are ſo neceſſary, that it may be truly ſaid, None ſhall be ſaved but by the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt; for none can be ſaved, nor recover God's Favour, without doing the Works and obeying the Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, which are ſo many proper Remedies prepared for as many Diſeaſes and Wounds as Sin has brought upon our Souls. But if one will not apply theſe Remedies to each Wound of the Soul, it can never be healed, but will periſh in its Ulcers and Sores. Chriſt by his Divine Wiſdom ſaw, that Man turn'd away from the LOVE OF GOD to love himſelf, or this World's Wealth and Pleaſures: And therefore he came to teach him how to deny himſelf, and to embrace Poverty and Hardſhips. Now theſe Things are deſpiſed by the Chriſtians of this Age, as if they would thus beſpeak their Maſter and Captain Jeſus Chriſt: *Be thou thy ſelf poor; embrace Sufferings; deny thy ſelf in our ſtead; for we deſire rather to live in Eaſe and Pleaſure; to be rich, and to follow our own Will. It's enough that we know thou haſt ſuffer'd even to the Death of the Croſs; that thou waſt deſpiſed, poor and humble, that we may hope for Salvation by thy Merits, without being obliged to do any thing our ſelves, or to break off and overcome our evil Habits. March*

thou

thou alone, and enter the Liſt, while we take our Eaſe and Pleaſure.

§. 38. Don't ſuch Soldiers of Chriſt, deſerve rather to be condemned by his Merits, than to be ſaved by them? Verily all Men of ſound Judgment will ſay, YEA; but they who are made blind and ſtupid by the falſe Doctrines of Men, will ſtill maintain, *That they ſhall be ſaved by the Merits of Chriſt*; though thoſe very Merits will condemn them, becauſe they would not follow ſo good and ſo perfect an Example as Chriſt has given them, doing his Works before them, and withal ſaying unto them, *Follow me*: (p) And again, *I have done all theſe things to give you an Example.* For what need had Chriſt to ſuffer, and labor to deny his own Will (which was more holy and perfect than that of all Men) ſince he never ſinn'd, and therefore was not liable to ſuffer for Sin? He ſtood in no need of Men, for he would have been as glorious after the Damnation of all Men, as he was before their Fall: So that he had no Intereſt as to himſelf either in the Salvation or Damnation of Men. But his Soul flaming with a holy and perfect Charity towards Men, he would needs ſhew them by what means they might recover God's Favour and Grace, that ſo they might work out their Salvation. But thoſe ungrateful and Preſumptuous Men ſay now-a-days, they are not obliged to do any thing, and that Chriſt has done all for them; as if he were their hired Servant to bear their Burthens: Whereas they ought rather to bluſh with Shame and Confuſion, when they ſee, that ſuch a Lord has ſo far abaſed himſelf, that he might ſhew them the Way of Salvation, ſaying to them of himſelf, *I am the Way* (q): And again, *He that loveth me ſhall do the Works that I do, yea and greater Works ſhall he do.* But the modern Chriſtians ſay, *That they cannot imitate Jeſus Chriſt*; which is as much as to ſay, *They cannot be ſaved*: For after he has ſo particularly pointed out to them ſo many Means of Salvation, the Blame cannot any longer be laid on the Grace of God, nor on the Merits of Chriſt, but only on the Self-will of Man, which reſiſts God's Will, and will not yield, nor give up it ſelf to be govern'd by the Divine Wiſdom.

§. 39. Perhaps you will ſay to me, my Friend, That you deſire to follow God's Will in all things, and to reſign your ſelf to his holy Conduct, being ready to do every thing that you know to be the Will of God. Which yet is moſt falſe, ſince your Soul is not diſpoſed ſo much as to know the

(p) *John* xiii. 15. 1 *Pet.* ii. 21. (q) *John* xiv. 12.

Will of God. These are but the falſe Perſwaſions of your deceitful Heart, which makes you think that to be true which is really falſe. Therefore it is ſaid in the Scripture, (r) that *the Heart is deceitful above all things.* And as one deſires always to excuſe and cover his Faults, ſo you will ſay perhaps, that you know not God's Will, that you may do it. But I will tell you, you may know it both from the holy Scriptures, and by my Writings; and that if you do not know it, it is certainly becauſe you will not know it; tho' you are obliged to learn and to underſtand it, ſince you have the means of doing it; and Ignorance cannot excuſe Sin. Verily God will not admit of your Excuſes, they being ſuch as even I cannot admit, when I ſee your Deeds quite contrary to your Words and Thoughts; for you think you are ſubject in every thing, while you are not ſubject in any thing. I adviſed you to divert your Mind a little, and to do ſome little things that are neceſſary in Houſe-keeping; ſuch as to feed the Pullets, to pull Gooſe-berries, or to do ſome other little Buſineſs that is not difficult, and which the Brethren, that are fit for other things, muſt do, becauſe you neglect it. But you would not comply in ſo very ſmall Matters, ſaying, *You could not do theſe things*; though you are neither lame, nor maimed, nor blind, nor ſick; and all the Weakneſs which you ſay, you have comes from this, that out of a fooliſh Fancy you will not eat nor drink, but after your own Way, and when you pleaſe. About which I have alſo written to you, and adviſed you to eat oftner, and to take a little Wine; which Advice you likewiſe deſpiſed, pertinaciouſly refuſing to eat, telling me, that *oftentimes for the ſpace of three Days you had eat nothing.*

§. 40. Which I do not at all approve, and I think it is an Invention of the Devil to make you die his Martyr, and to perſwade you falſely, that you have the Vertue of faſting more than other Men; tho' your Faſts proceed from the Vice of Wilfulneſs and Arrogance, and to ſhew that you are ſick, that you may not be put to do any Work. For if it were a Vertue to live without Meat, certainly Jeſus Chriſt, his Apoſtles, the holy Prophets and Patriarchs would have lived without Eating, or taken only a Refreſhment once in Three Days (as you ſay you have done ſeveral times:) But all thoſe holy Souls did eat and drink according to their Neceſſities; knowing, that every thing that has Life muſt be ſuſtain'd with Food ſuitable to its Nature; and for that they

(r) *Jer.* xvii. 9.

would

would not tempt God, as you do; deſiring it ſeems to live ſupernaturally, or to let your ſelf die of Hunger; and that under a Pretext of Vertue and Temperance. Which ſerves for a Cover to your Sins of Wilfulneſs and Diſobedience, the Two Pillars upon which all your ſeeming Vertue is built. This now you muſt diſcover, if you would be ſaved, and muſt not perſevere in the deceitful Vertue which you ſay you have, remembring always what the Scripture ſays, *That the Heart of Man is deceitful above all things.* And if you pleaſe to examine whether yours deceives you, you need only to obſerve your Words and Actions, which you will find to be falſe and counterfeit in many things. For when you came firſt amongſt us, you ſaid divers times, *You thought you was in a Paradiſe*; but afterwards you begg'd to be carried back to *Amſterdam*, and that you would chuſe rather to ſtay there in a Chamber alone, tho' you ſhould have nothing but dry Bread and Beer to live upon: For you imagine that you would live very ſoberly; and yet we ſee daily, that the Meat cannot be too dainty, nor the Wine too delicious for you. Which ſhews the Deceit of your Heart, while you think you have the Vertues, of which you are altogether void. Beſides you have often ſaid to us, *That you would willingly do all kind of Service to the Society, if it were in your Power*: But when I deſired you to feed Four young Pigeons, you ſaid, *You could not, and that you had an Averſion to it; that your Mother had not taught you to do ſuch things, and therefore you would not do it*; and ſo you ſent me back the Pigeons, adding, *That if the King, the Emperor, or the Pope, ſhould command you to feed thoſe Creatures, or elſe to loſe your Head, you would chuſe the laſt.* And at the ſame time you kneel'd down in Fury, and ſhew'd with your Hand how you would rather let your Head be cut off, than that you would feed thoſe young Pigeons. And thus alſo on many other Occaſions I have found by Experience, that your Words and Thoughts are falſe and deceitful.

§. 41. For you ſay, that *you are free from Covetouſneſs*, and that *you would willingly throw your Money away from you*, and yet you was extreamly anxious and vex'd, becauſe your Trunk was not brought out of the Caſtle into your Chamber, that you might look upon your Money; and with a furious Paſſion you compell'd our Brethren to leave all other neceſſary and uſeful Buſineſs, and go with our Horſes to fetch this Trunk. And to cover this Care and Anxiety to have your Money, you ſaid, *It was to keep it for the Behoof of God's Children*: Which is a very great Miſtake. For if you had

been diſengaged from the Love of Earthly Goods, you would have left all you had in the Brethren's Cuſtody, without being ſo very anxious about it your ſelf, after the Example of the Chriſtians of the Primitive Church, who put all in common, laying all at the Apoſtles Feet. But you will give nothing in common, being deſirous to remain Proprietor of all, that you may diſpoſe of it at your Pleaſure; and you are offended that Wine, Brandy, and other things are not bought for you with this Money; and that a Woman was not hired to make your Bed, clean your Room, and do you other Service. Yea, you tell our Brethren, *That you will pay them with your Money*, and ſuch like things; though yet you have not much to give, and our Brethren are not mercenary, but ſerve and aſſiſt you out of pure Charity. And when you are convinced of this, you tell them, *You would be ready to do the ſame Service to a* Turk, *if he ſtood in need of it.*

§. 42. This is as deceitful as all the reſt; for you want to be ſerved by our Brethren, and yet you will not ſerve them in the leaſt thing; for when they recommend to you the doing of ſomething for the Society, you ſay, *You have not learned to do theſe Things.* Even as you told me to Day, when I ſaw you at the Fire picking a Fowl for your ſelf and others, you ſaid, complaining of this Employ, *I never did ſuch a thing in my Life*; as if you would have me to underſtand, that ſo mean and ſervile a Work did not become you, and that you ſhould be left at Liberty to do nothing. For you ſay, *That by the Goodneſs of God you have been ſtill at Liberty to lie down or riſe when you pleas'd.* As if you thought it a great matter to have the ſame Liberty that a Beaſt has, which lies down and riſes when it will, and in every thing elſe follows the Motions of corrupt Nature.

§. 43. In which, it ſeems, you would imitate them, when you ſay, *That you cannot do that which is not pleaſing and agreeable to you*; and you conclude, *That all that pleaſes you, and which you reliſh, is good for you*; though this Argument is not founded upon Reaſon; for a ſenſual Perſon is uſually delighted with that which is contrary to his Health; and that which is pleaſing to corrupt Nature is oft-times prejudicial to the Health. But you being accuſtom'd to follow your own Will, your deceitful Heart makes you believe, that Evil is Good, and Good is Evil: For truly there is nothing good but the Will of God, and nothing evil but the Self-will of Man, which nevertheleſs you eſteem as God himſelf, or rather more than God. I know indeed that you will not ſay this in expreſs Terms; but your Actions proclaim it more

more clearly than your Words, while in effect you own, that you will not do any thing, but what is pleaſing to your corrupt Nature, and no more, though it were never ſo good, uſeful and profitable to the Society. For you oft-times ſay, *That though God ſhould command you to do any thing that you had not learned, you would not do it*; adding, *That God has given to every one the Grace to do ſomething, and you were never taught to do any thing, except to write and to pray: That every thing elſe is uneaſie to you, nay altogether impoſſible.* In which alſo your Heart greatly deceives you; for one Man may do what another can do, after he has learn'd it, except he be blind or lame, ſick or without Strength; which you are not; neither have you any other Sickneſs but that which you bring upon your ſelf by your Fancy, and by your wilful and too long Faſting, tho' thro' the Deceitfulneſs of your Heart you think you are naturally weak and ſick, and therefore incapable of doing any thing that may be uſeful to the Society; as if you deſired to live only for your ſelf, and would have every Body to do all that is neceſſary for you, which you will not learn; and you ſay, it is impoſſible for you to do Things that are moſt eaſie, healthful, and fit for diverting the Fancies that the Devil continually ſuggeſts to your Mind, that he may deſtroy you, and diſturb thoſe who deſire to help you.

§. 44. But you will not conſider theſe things, and you think you have Reaſon to Act as you do, neither do you think of amending; on the contrary you would willingly put us in the wrong, becauſe we do not flatter ſufficiently the corruption of your Nature; which we deſire not to do, knowing that we may offend God in another, nine ſeveral Ways: We are reſolv'd to Aid and Succor all thoſe who deſire to be true Chriſtians; but not thoſe who wilfully follow as much as they can, the Motions of their corrupt Nature, as you do. For this would be to *caſt Pearls before Swine, and the Childrens Bread to Dogs*; for we ſhould thereby feed and ſerve thoſe who will needs live only for themſelves; and will not labor for the good of their Neighbor, as all of us here do, without any other neceſſity, but that we may pleaſe God and aſſiſt them; that we may be able to ſay with St. *Paul* (s): *Behold theſe Hands miniſtred to my own Neceſſities, and thoſe that were with me.* But you will not follow this Doctrine of the Apoſtle, but deſire rather to live in Idleneſs, and to be the Devil's Pillow, than to labor in the Lord's Vineyard, as

(s) *Acts* xx. 34.

We

we endeavor to do before you. This you ought to imitate, rather than to deſpiſe it, or to imagine that it would be impoſſible for you, ſeeing *David* ſays (*t*), *that through God he could leap over Walls*: and St. *Paul* (*u*); *I can do all things thro' Chriſt that ſtrengthens me.* For my part, I perceive clearly, that *one may do all that he Wills*, being aſſiſted by the Divine Grace, in which God is not wanting to him who ſeeks and deſires it. But you take no care to ask it, ſeeing you deſire not to have it, loving rather to live in Idleneſs, than to obtain Grace to labor that you may ſerve your ſelf, and have what is needful for you. Thus you are unmindful of what the Apoſtle ſays, that *he who will not Work, neither ſhould he Eat.* And to be juſt, you ought to be ſatisfied with ſo little, as that you might not need to provide for any other thing but Bread and Beer, and thus a deal of Labor would be ſpared: But you muſt have dainty Meats to pleaſe your Taſte, clean Linnen, Diſhes, *&c.* And yet you will not be at the Pains to clean them your ſelf, but think you deſerve to be ſerved by others. This is highly contrary to Chriſtian Vertue and Charity, which covets not to be ſerved, nor to impoſe Servile Work on others. For my part, when I am afflicted with Sickneſs, I lament nothing ſo much as the trouble I give others to ſerve me in my Need: but the trouble given to the whole Society does not move you, provided you be ſerved according to your Humour.

§. 45. This is an Evidence of your Self-Love, and of the great Eſteem you have for your ſelf, which yet you will not acknowledge, becauſe of the deceitfulneſs of your Heart, which makes you ſay, *that you are the leaſt among the Brethren, and that you would gladly ſerve them if you could.* If this were true, you could eaſe them of a great deal of their ſervile and neceſſary Buſineſs, as to clean the Houſe, make the Fire, to rinſe the Glaſſes, clean the Spoons, to gather and waſh the Herbs for the Kitchin. But your Heart is too haughty to do ſuch mean Things. Such meanneſs is not conſiſtent with the Eſteem you have of your ſelf. You reckon all theſe things below you, and that it is fit and reaſonable that another do them for you. And that you may not be aſham'd to ſee that I and the Brethren alſo do theſe things before you, you tell us, *that God has not granted you ſo much Grace as to be able to do ſuch Things.* This is alſo a Cheat; ſeeing theſe are all things that do not require much natural Strength, for a Child of ten Years can do them exactly.

(*t*) *Pſ.* xviii. (*u*) *Phil.* iv. 13.

§. 46. But

§. 46. But all your Miſery conſiſts in this, that you have not yet ſufficiently comprehended the neceſſity of denying your ſelf, and of ſubduing or mortifying corrupt Nature; and you reckon it a great Inſtance of Prudence to cheriſh it, and to afford it what it deſires. I declare theſe things, not to reprove or contemn you, but that the Eyes of your Underſtanding may be opened, that you may ſee the State of your Soul, and know the Truth of every Thing; leſt when you go out of this World you find your ſelf miſtaken, for having ſtill believed that you was going on in the Way of Salvation, while you are walking in that of Damnation, which is *that broad way* which our Lord ſays, *leads to Deſtruction, and that many there be that walk in it.*

§. 47. This is evident, if we conſider the Life of the Chriſtians of this preſent Age, who, we ſee, follow in all things the Inclinations of their corrupt Nature, even as the Beaſts do. And living thus they ſhall never ſee God, whom they have forſaken in this Life, that they may follow their Corruption; and therefore they ſhall be ſeparated from him to all Eternity; in which their everlaſting Damnation will conſiſt. My Friend, I have written to you this Letter, becauſe you do not well underſtand me when I ſpeak to you, by reaſon of your Deafneſs. But I do not write it for you only, but for all well-meaning Souls, who periſh thro' Ignorance; becauſe they know not the abſolute neceſſity there is to reſiſt corrupt Nature, that they may be ſaved; and that I might alſo ſhew them their blindneſs and the deceitfulneſs of their Hearts, which very few diſcover before it be too late. For many go out of this World full of hope to be ſaved, who after Death find themſelves confin'd to eternal Damnation, for that they would not hearken unto and obey the eternal Truth; which expreſly declares (w), *That unleſs a Man be born again, he ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

§. 48. There are ſcarce any Chriſtians, who are ignorant of this Sentence pronounced by the Holy Spirit: yea Men do utter, and read, and declare thoſe very Words, and yet do not know wherein this Regeneration, that is ſo neceſſary, doth conſiſt. Some place it in the good Deſires of their Hearts; others in good Works; ſome in that they can talk well of Vertue, or that they gladly hear Preachers, or others who make a Profeſſion of it. Some place Regeneration in forſaking the World, and ſeparating one's ſelf from it; others in Prayer and other pious Exerciſes. But believe me, all

(w) *John* iii.

theſe

theſe things, with many more, are only the Effects of the deceitfulneſs of our Heart, which falſely perſwades it ſelf, that it has attain'd to Regeneration, when it is yet altogether cram'd with ſelf Love, and follows the Motions of its corrupt Nature, which moſt certainly, tho' inſenſibly, leads the Soul to Deſtruction. For when once one has reſolv'd to work out his Salvation, and for this end has abandon'd the World, and groſs outward Sins, he preſently thinks he is ſure of Salvation, tho' he truſts only to a broken Plank, which may Shipwrack him in the midſt of his Courſe, if he ſtill live in Self-Love, and follow the Motions of his corrupt Nature, in which eternal Damnation doth conſiſt.

§. 49. Wherefore I think, God has granted no ſmall Favour to Men, in diſcovering to them in theſe laſt times, the deceitfulneſs of their Hearts, the Wickedneſs of corrupt Nature, and the way to be regenerated in the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt: ſeeing for want of knowing theſe things all Men periſh. It is true, I bring no new Law, nor new Goſpel; yet as St. *John* ſays, *I bring a new Commandment*, but no other Commandment than what God gave unto Man from the time he created him, namely (*x*), *to love God with all his Heart, with all his Soul, and with all his Strength.*

§. 50. I do not ſay that God diſtinctly pronounced theſe Words, after having created Man. But he ſpoke them ſubſtantially to Man from the Inſtant he created him, by letting him ſee the Graces and Favors which he had beſtowed upon him, having made him as a little God, depending upon him only, and withal having created all this beautiful World for his Delight, and ſubjected to him ſo many excellent Creatures, over whom he was to Rule. Now all this, and much more being known by Man (whom God had created, that he might take his Delight with him) was not Man obliged to love ſuch a Benefactor, ſo that there was no need that God by an expreſs Command ſhould enjoyn this Love? Muſt not this LAW OF LOVE have been deeply enough imprinted in his Heart and Soul, without telling him in expreſs Terms; *Thou ſhalt Love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength*, as God afterwards commanded *Moſes* to tell him; becauſe of the Fall and Frailty to which Man was reduc'd by Sin, being become forgetful of the Favors of his God? This Law of loving God was imprinted in Man's Nature from his Creation, which is commonly called *the Law of Nature*, which inwardly obliged Man to

(*x*) 1 *John* ii.

love

love his God. And after this Law was in a manner extinguiſhed, or had loſt its Vigor in Man, God of his infinite Goodneſs and Mercy did form a Law, that they might underſtand diſtinctly by Words, the Obligation that Man had to Love his God, and this he commanded *Moſes* to teach them.

§. 51. Therefore I can now ſay truly (as St. *John*) *that I bring no new Law, and likewiſe that I bring a new Law*; becauſe the ſame LAW OF LOVE, which God gave unto Man at firſt, is now ſo buried in Oblivion, that it is no longer own'd. Yea they who among Men, call themſelves God's Ambaſſadors, preach publickly, *That this Law of God cannot be obſerved.* So earneſt are they to raze it out, and obliterate it, that Men forgetting it, may inſenſibly periſh. Wherefore God by this his laſt Mercy has ſent me to publiſh again the ſame Law, becauſe it is decreed at the Throne of the Divine Juſtice, *That none ſhall be ſaved, but they who die in the Love of God.* And becauſe I declare thoſe Eternal Truths, they ſeek to kill me, they perſecute and deſpiſe me, as if I brought a new and unheard-of Law, when yet this is the ancient Law of Nature, the written Law of *Moſes*, and the Goſpel Law which Chriſt brought unto Men in the laſt times. So that of theſe *three Laws* together I make but *one*, ſeeing they have but one and the ſame end, and all of them equally tend to ſhew Men the Obligation they have to love their God and Creator. Are theſe Hereſies, as the Clergy Men now a-days are pleas'd to call them? Is not this a Chriſtian Truth, to believe that Man is bound to love his God? And tho' there were no Scripture for it, would not Man's Reaſon dictate to him, that he ought always to love his Benefactor, whom even the brute Beaſts do love, and know thoſe who do them good? Is Man become more unnatural than a Beaſt, that he dare ſay, he cannot love his God, ſo great a Benefactor, from whom he has received his Being and all Things?

§. 52. It is like, my Friend, you believe alſo that you love God, and that you acknowledge all his Benefits towards you. But this perſwaſion comes (like other things) from the deceitfulneſs of your Heart, which preſumes in every thing that it has the Vertue, which it hath not. And if you deſire to know whether you love God truly, you muſt obſerve carefully, whether you love your ſelf or any other thing out of God; for the Scripture ſays (*y*), *that no Man can ſerve two Maſters, but he muſt love the one and hate the other*; that is to ſay, no

(*y*) *Matth.* vi. 24.

Man

Man can ſincerely love God, while he loves himſelf or any other created Thing: for God will have no divided Heart, nor diſtracted with other Loves. Therefore the Scripture expreſly tells us (*z*), *that God muſt be loved with the whole Heart*, and that a part of its Affections muſt not be ſet upon the Pleaſures and Accommodations of this Life, to pleaſe the Palate and the other natural Senſes.

§. 53. For all this is a kind of Adultery. Even as if a Woman married to a Husband ſhould love another as much, yea more than him. She would certainly deſerve in Juſtice and Equity to be divorced from her lawful Husband: How much more then ought the Soul that Violates its Faith to its God, to be divorc'd and rejected by him, who had choſen it from among all his other Creatures to be his Spouſe, that he might take his Delight with it, as the Scripture tells us in expreſs Words (*a*), *My Delights are with the Children of Men*: And whereas this Soul, the Spouſe of God, ought to take all its Pleaſure in him; it rather delights in every other Thing that's unworthy of it, for we ſee ſome delight in pleaſing their Palate, others in the Luſts of the Fleſh; one delights in worldly Riches and Honors; another in fine Cloaths and many Servants, or in ſtately Houſes and Gardens, coſtly Furniture and Equipage.

§. 54. Thus the Soul violating its Faith to God, takes Delight and Pleaſure in a Thouſand kinds of Trifles and periſhing Things, inſtead of having all its Affections fix'd upon God alone, who deſerves to be loved for his boundleſs Perfections, which tranſcend all that's beautiful, good, wiſe and powerful, and who *does the Will of the Soul that loves him* †. But this ungrateful Soul forgets and ſlights the Favors and Friendſhip of God, and ſets it ſelf to love things ſo baſe, ſo vile and ſo weak, which cannot afford it any true Contentment and Satisfaction. On the contrary, what it loves moſt, does oft-times give it more Trouble, Sorrow and Anguiſh than Tranquility and Peace. This makes Man highly blameworthy for making ſo bad a Choice, in pitching upon things ſo mean and abject, and of ſo ſhort Continuance, whereupon to ſet his Affections, inſtead of chuſing things Eternal. For we ſee God has made him capable of theſe, and worthy to love his God, if he will correſpond with his Love, which is a thing ſo reaſonable, that we may be aſtoniſh'd to ſee, that ſo much as one Man loves any thing beſides his God, ſeeing there is nothing lovely but He.

(*z*) *Deut.* vi. 5. (*a*) *Prov.* viii. 31. (†) *Pſal.* cxlv. 19.

§. 55.

§. 55. But Sin has ſo blinded the Soul, that it ſees no longer its true Good, and through the Stupidity that Sin has brought upon its Spirit, it chuſes its Miſery for its Happineſs; ſo that it diſcovers more Ignorance and Stupidity in its Conduct than the Beaſts do; for they by natural Inſtinct ſeek their own Good, and avoid their Hurt: Whereas Man does the quite contrary, and puts a greater Value upon Temporal Pleaſures, than on thoſe Delights which are Eternal. For every one knows, or at leaſt ought to know, that he cannot enjoy Two Paradiſes, and that he muſt not look for a Life of Eternal Bleſſedneſs, when he chuſes this World's Delights and Pleaſures, whither Man is baniſhed to do Penitence, and not to ſeek his Eaſe and Pleaſure, of which he is unworthy, ſeeing he has turn'd away his Love from his God, and become his Enemy; though yet corrupt Nature and the Deceit of Man's Heart makes him believe, that all good and beautiful things are given by God for the Delight of Man. Which is moſt true, if Man had continued to be the Friend of God. But ſince he wilfully became his Enemy, thoſe good and beautiful Things do not any more belong to him, nor can he any longer diſpoſe of them at his Pleaſure. Yea, he ought voluntarily to deprive himſelf of them, as being unworthy of them, becauſe he has rendred himſelf incapable of inheriting the unſpeakable and eternal Goods and Joy of a Father, whom he has ſo grievouſly offended: For it would not be juſt that ſuch a Prodigal and debauch'd Son ſhould inherit the Goods his Father has purchaſed for him with ſo much Care. It is juſt that the Father reſtrain ſuch a Son, and that he allow him not the Liberty to diſpoſe of his Goods, though thoſe by the Right of Nature might have belonged to him. It is fit that the Son for his own Good be denied this Privilege, ſince he would abuſe it to his own Hurt. Thus alſo God doth curb corrupt Nature, and will not have it to enjoy and diſpoſe at its Pleaſure, of all the good and beautiful Things which he created for Man; but he requires that it rather humble it ſelf, and count it ſelf unworthy even of the Things that are neceſſary for its Suſtentation; ſo far ought it to be from enjoying and delighting it ſelf in the good and beautiful Things which God created for his Children, and not for the Wicked, or for thoſe who abuſe his Favours.

§. 56. In which many deceive themſelves, when they ſay, that God has created for them all that is good and beautiful in Nature. For this is moſt falſe; and they can enjoy nothing that is good and beautiful, but after the manner that Thieves enjoy the Goods they have ſtol'n from others. Thus

the

the Wicked unjuſtly uſe good Meat, fine Cloaths and Ornaments, and all other delicious Things, which God created only for his beloved Ones, and not for thoſe who ſet their Affections upon ſuch mean Things, and embrace and love them as if they were the great and laſt End for which they were created; tho' by their Words they Profeſs that they receive them with Thankſgiving.

§. 57. Which is as falſe as the Things already mention'd; for they cannot truly give Thanks to God for the things which they think they deſerve as of Right belonging to them, and which God has created for them. It is like indeed that the Delight they take in their ſenſual Satisfactions hinders them from lifting up their Hearts to God, to thank him for the Good and pleaſant things which he gives them, and that they rather act like the Swine, which when under the Oak are eating the Acorns which fall to them, are more taken up about ſeeking after them, and glutting themſelves with them, than to look up to him who throws them down. Juſt ſo does the ſenſual Perſon, with reſpect to God, when he feeds on dainty Fare, or partakes of other Pleaſures: He is more careful to fill his Belly and ſatisfie his Appetite, than truly to bleſs God. Seeing he who places his Affections out of God, is unmindful of him. For the Scripture tells us, (a) *That where your Heart is, there is your Treaſure*: To ſhew, that he who has ſet his Affections upon Eating and Drinking, or other ſenſual Delights, hath there his Heart and his Treaſure: And if ſuch a one ſpeak of God, it is with his Lips only; for the Heart cannot be divided into the Love of Objects ſo different and diſtant from one another. But Man's Heart, being ſtill deceitful, gives him falſe Perſwaſions with ſuch fair Appearances of Truth, that he himſelf believes that to be true which is falſe, and that he gives thanks unto God, even when he is abuſing his Favors, and turning away his Affections from his God, the Author of all Good, that he may ſet them on the pleaſant Morſels of corruptible Food, which is no ſooner down the Throat, but it ſtinks and is corrupted. And yet notwithſtanding all theſe Evils and Ignorance, Man hopes to be ſaved, and to obtain a bleſſed Eternity. In this he will certainly be diſappointed, and at Death he muſt be ſatisfied with the Paradiſe he choſe in this World, and the fading and imperfect Delights that he would needs enjoy in this Life: This is the Portion that the ſenſual Man hath choſen, and it

(a) *Matth.* vi. 21.

would

would be in vain for him to look for another, when he removes out of this World.

§. 58. Yea, he ought rather to bluſh for Shame and Confuſion, that he ſhould deſire to be plac'd among ſo many bleſſed Souls, who during this mortal Life embraced Penitence, mortified their Bodies, and reſiſted the ſenſual Appetites of their corrupt Nature, denying it even the leaſt ſenſual Pleaſure, and circumciſing their Fleſh for the Kingdom of Heaven; as all thoſe have done who have obtain'd Salvation hitherto, and all who ſhall be ſaved muſt do to the End of the World: For there is no other Way that leads to Salvation, but the Croſs and Sufferings of Chriſt. This St. *Paul* confirms, when he ſays, (*b*) *That he knows nothing but Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified.* And if there had been any other Way of Salvation, Chriſt would undoubtedly have taught it us. But he ſpeaks to us only of the *Croſs*, of *ſuffering Perſecution for Righteouſneſs ſake*, foretelling his Diſciples, *That they ſhould be perſecuted, yea put to Death for his Name*; adding, *That the Servant is not better than his Lord; if they have perſecuted me, they will perſecute you alſo* †.

§. 59. But theſe carnal Perſons, who will take their Pleaſures in this World, have forgotten the Admonitions of Chriſt, or they perſwade themſelves, that he has ſuffered all theſe things for them; and they promiſe to themſelves an imaginary Paradiſe, which they ſhall never really obtain, ſince they ſell it, that they may enjoy in this World ſome Dainties for their Palate, a little Puff of Honor, or ſome filthy Pleaſure; and truly they do much worſe than *Eſau* *, *who ſold his Birthright for one Morſel of Meat*, while theſe poor blinded Souls, through the Deceitfulneſs of their Hearts, ſell their Part of Paradiſe for ſome vain Pleaſure, that doth ſo quickly vaniſh, and ends in Bitterneſs, even oft-times in this preſent Life, as the Proverb is, *For one Pleaſure, a thouſand Pains*: For in truth I never obſerved any Pleaſure in this World, which did not end in Grief and Sorrows. And tho' many have the Experience of this, yet they will not ceaſe to purſue and embrace thoſe tranſitory Pleaſures with the Loſs of Eternal Bleſſedneſs; which yet they are perſwaded they ſhall obtain at laſt, after they have ſet themſelves to gratifie their corrupt Senſes, and taken in this World all the Eaſe and Pleaſures they could have. In which they greatly deceive themſelves; becauſe the Righteouſneſs of God renders, and ſtill will render to every Man according to his Works; as the Scripture

(b) 1 *Cor.* ii. 2. † *Joh.* xv. 20. * *Heb.* xii. 16.

 inti-

intimates, when it is ſaid, *By thy Works thou ſhalt be judged, and by thy Works thou ſhalt be condemned.* It is not ſaid, according to your Imagination or vain Hopes, or according to the Perſwaſion you have that you ſhall obtain Two Paradiſes, the one in this World, in the Purſuit of its Pleaſures, and the other in the Kingdom of Heaven, where nevertheleſs *no unclean Thing doth enter:* But every Man ſhall be preſented before the Judgment Seat of God, where it ſhall be ſaid, *Behold the Man and his Works.*

§. 60. I know very well, that many imagine (as you likewiſe do, my Friend) that for one to follow his Appetites in the Uſe of Meat and Drink, and to take his Eaſe and Conveniency, and give other ſuch Satisfactions to Nature, are not to be reckon'd among evil Works. But ſeeing I ſpeak to Chriſtians, who know the Scriptures, I wiſh they would conſider well the Sentence given to the rich Glutton thus, (c) *Remember that thou in thy Life-time receivedſt thy good Things, and likewiſe* Lazarus *evil Things: But now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* The Scripture does not accuſe this rich Man of any other evil Deeds, but ſuch as all commit, who live according to corrupt Nature, who ſeek in all things the fineſt, moſt pleaſant and delicious, and moſt convenient, as this rich Man did, of whom the Scripture ſays, *That he was cloathed in Purple and fine Linnen, and fared ſumptuouſly every Day*‡. Lo, theſe are all the Crimes of which the Scripture doth accuſe him, making no mention of any other Sin. This may well hinder any from thinking that they ſhall not be damned for having gorgeous and coſtly Apparel, and faring ſumptuouſly, as uſually all thoſe do who have abundance of this World's Goods, ſince the Rich count it their Glory to live magnificently as to their Apparel, Furniture, Retinue and Entertainment, according to their Quality. This is ſo common, that he would be eſteem'd a penurious and covetous Wretch, who ſhould not live thus plentifully as to outward Accommodations, and good and delicious Fare. This is the broad Way that leads to Deſtruction, wherein truly many walk, becauſe they do not ſufficiently conceive, that all the ſenſual Pleaſures, to which Men give themſelves in this Life, ſhall in the next be puniſhed with as many divers Torments.

§. 61. This the Holy Scriptures confirm, when ſpeaking of the great Whore, they ſay (d), *How much ſhe hath glorified her ſelf, and lived deliciouſly, ſo much Torment and Sorrow give her.* For my part, I think, that a Man will be puniſh'd with as

(c) *Luke* xvi. 25. ‡ *Luke* xvi. 19. (d) *Rev.* xviii. 7.

many

many kinds of Torments through all Eternity, as there were kinds of Pleaſures in which he delighted himſelf here. The Catholicks expreſs this in a Book entituled, THE ART OF LIVING WELL, AND OF DYING WELL; where by Pictures the ſeveral Torments are repreſented, which the Damned ſuffer in Hell. There they repreſent the Gluttons, and thoſe who were given to delicious Fare, with their Tables full of Serpents, Lizards, Toads, Spiders, and other venomous Beaſts, ſerved up to them, which the Devils cram down their Throats, and withal pour into them melted Lead and Cups of Poyſon. And the Lewd and Luxurious are repreſented quite naked, and upon them are faſtned Serpents, which gnaw and bite their ſecret Parts, and wind themſelves in and out of their Bellies, which they have rent, tearing out their Bowels. They who in this World took Pleaſure to dreſs and paint themſelves, are repreſented with their Heads full of little Serpents, inſtead of Hair, which gnaw their Necks and their Cheeks, and crawl in and out at their Mouths, their Noſtrils, and the Hollow of their Eyes. All which are frightful Pictures, with a great many more, which the Curious may ſee in the Book it ſelf, which I do not look upon as Canonical in its Pictures, becauſe the Pains of Hell cannot be pourtray'd; for they are greater than all this World's Torments put together. But as Poets are allow'd to make Emblems ſuitable to their Deſigns; ſo in my Opinion it is lawful for devout Men to repreſent their Thoughts by external Images and Pictures, to make thoſe who are ſlow and dull in their Underſtanding to conceive the horrid Pains, with which the Damned ſhall be tormented in Hell: Namely, that according as they were addicted to divers Vices in this World, they ſhall in like manner endure divers Torments in Hell, and that according to the ſtricteſt Juſtice.

§. 62. God will not let any Sins go unpuniſh'd, nor any good Work unrewarded. Hence as a Soul is endued with Charity and the Love of God, it ſhall accordingly be exalted to different Degrees of Glory. This our Lord inſinuates, when he ſays (*e*), *In my Father's Houſe are many Manſions*; that is, in Paradiſe there ſhall be as many Degrees of Glory, as there have been in this World of Vertue; and the more cloſely that one has follow'd Chriſt in this World, he ſhall the more nearly approach unto him in his Glory through all Eternity. Wherefore a Man ought to reckon himſelf more happy in bearing the Croſs, and in being deſpiſed with

(*e*) *John* xiv. 2.

Chriſt, than in poſſeſſing Wealth and Riches, whereby he may take his Eaſe and Pleaſure in this ſhort and wretched Life, ſeeing the Delights of this temporal Paradiſe cannot afford the leaſt Degree of that Joy and Contentment, which holy and bleſſed Souls ſhall inherit through all Eternity.

§. 63. This is eaſie to be comprehended, when once this is laid down for an Eternal Truth, that there is no Good but in God alone, and that there cannot be a greater Evil, than in the Privation of all Good; in which all die, who take their Delight in this World. To ſuch God will pronounce this fearful Sentence (*f*), *Depart from me all ye that work Iniquity*; or, *Go ye Curſed into everlaſting Fire*: Thus driving from him all thoſe who chuſe to take their Delight in any other thing than in God alone, to love whom they were created. But ſenſual Men are affected only with preſent Things, and cannot conceive the Joys of a bleſſed Eternity, for which only they were created. They prefer a ſmall ſenſual Pleaſure to thoſe Eternal Joys that ſhall never end; and thus they ſhall have no Paradiſe, neither in this World, nor in that which is to come. For tho' they ſeek to have full Contentment in this World, they ſhall never find it: For our Souls being Divine, can be ſatisfied with nothing but God alone; and ſeeing in this World they have not ſought after thoſe Eternal Delights, they ſhall never find them, but at Death ſhall ſee themſelves deprived both of the one Paradiſe and the other; for then they can no longer enjoy their temporal Pleaſures, for which nevertheleſs they have loſt thoſe that are Eternal.

§. 64. Thus the wretched Soul perceives too late the bad Choice it has made, and bewails its Misfortune with a deſperate Anguiſh, wiſhing rather it had ſuffered in this World all kind of Miſeries, than to have enjoy'd any the leaſt Pleaſure in it. But all is in vain, ſince its Time of Penitence is over, which cannot be recall'd. It muſt ſuffer the Torments which its Pleaſures have brought upon it; neither can it avoid them, nor ſubſtitute any in its Place, but muſt hear this Sentence (*g*), *Wo unto you that are full, for ye ſhall hunger.*

§. 65. Hence alſo it appears, that in Hell there ſhall be diverſe Torments, ſeeing for Fulneſs they ſhall have Hunger, and without doubt the damned ſhall inherit all the Evils which Sin has brought upon all Things. This Curſe will be the

(f) *Matth.* xxv. 41. (g) *Luke* vi. 25.

Lot of the Damned, who aſſuredly ſhall feel the burning and ſmoke of Fire, the Storms and Tempeſts of the Air, the violent Floods and raging of the Waters, the prickings of the Thorns and Thiſtles which the Earth brings forth. Theſe Souls ſhall no doubt feel the Wounds and Cuttings of Iron, the Blows and Bruiſes of Wood, and Bitings and Tearings of Beaſts: For none of theſe things, nor any malignity that is in Nature, came from God. Theſe are all the Works of wicked Men, who have deformed and disfigured the Works of God, which he created ſo good and beautiful. It is moſt reaſonable therefore that he who has done Evil, ſhould bear the Pains and Miſeries of it. For who can be obliged to bear the Evil that another has done? It would be unjuſt that the Righteous ſhould ſuffer for the Guilty, and bear the Puniſhments due to the Malefactor: And ſince Evil, having once a Being, muſt have its Place of Subſiſtence, of neceſſity it muſt dwell for ever in the Souls of thoſe who were the Authors of it. This is that which makes their Hell.

§. 66. For where ſhould thoſe go, who have choſen their Paradiſe in this World, and would needs pleaſe themſelves in gratifying the Luſts of their corrupt Nature? In Heaven ſurely they could not ſtay; for in it there is no Corruption, or ſenſual Delight. There they do not talk of Laſciviouſneſs, nor carnal Pleaſures, nor of delicate Fare, nor of delicious Wines, nor of any other Pleaſures which do gratifie corrupt Nature: But the bleſſed in Paradiſe take all their Delight in God alone, and there they drink full Draughts of the Nectar of his Love, and their moſt delicate Fare lies in the accompliſhing of his divine Will: in which ſenſual Souls took no Pleaſure in this World; and therefore they ſhall never enjoy it in Eternity. They ſhall flee to Hell to ſeek Companions like themſelves, and there they ſhall find a huge Company of ſenſual Souls, ſuch as they themſelves are, which the more numerous they are, will ſo much the more increaſe their mutual Pains and Torments, by the deſperate Howling, Anguiſh and Confuſion which is to be met with in Hell, in the Society of the damned; where, inſtead of loving and helping one another, they ſhall vex and torture one another, and belch forth Curſes againſt God who created them. This makes ſad Muſick for thoſe who delighted themſelves in Melody in this World. So that all the Senſes of thoſe who delighted themſelves in corruptible Things, ſhall in Hell have their particular Torments.

§. 67. Wherefore that Man is very unwiſe who takes his ſenſual Delights here as much as he can; ſeeing he muſt endure

dure Torments in Hell, in proportion to the Pleaſures where-with he has Studied to gratify his Senſes here. This the Scripture teſtifies in the forecited Words concerning the Whore, of whom it is ſaid (*h*), *How much ſhe hath glorified herſelf, and lived deliciouſly, ſo much Torment and Sorrow give her.* So that it were the Intereſt, even of a wicked Man, to abſtain from the Pleaſures of this Life, that he might not encreaſe his Torments and Sorrow hereafter, and to ceaſe from Sin, even tho' he knew he were to be damned, that he might leſſen his Pains hereafter, which will be meaſured out according to the many or few Sins committed in this World. How much more ought a Man to abſtain altogether from Sin, that he may obtain eternal bleſſedneſs, and wholly eſcape the Torments of Hell?

§. 68. I think, my Friend, you may ſufficiently perceive by this Letter, how greatly Sin hath *corrupted the Nature* of Man, and that none can follow this Corruption without damning and deſtroying his own Soul; nor can any inherit the Kingdom of God, unleſs he War againſt and overcome this Corruption, which is the Enemy of God; and that he who chuſeth his Paradiſe in this World, by following his Eaſe and Pleaſures, is cruel to himſelf, and an Enemy to his own Happineſs. It is your part now to conſider if you will continue to follow your *corrupt Nature* (as you have done hitherto;) or if you will combat it by denying it what it loves moſt, and giving it what is moſt contrary to it: as an eminent Perſon gave Advice to good Men, ſaying to them, *Hate what you Love moſt. Ceaſe to do that which you are inclin'd to do*; that is, *if you deſire to pleaſe God, you muſt always do what is oppoſite to Nature.* But you do the quite contrary; and you ſay, that *you cannot do that which is repugnant to your Nature.* You ſay alſo that all things which ſeem good to Nature are uſeful, and that you cannot do that which is not agreeable to you. As if you had abſolutely reſolv'd to follow in all things the Motions of your Corruption, and not to reſtrain it in any thing. In the mean time you think you do well, and that you ſhall be ſaved at laſt; and you do not perceive that the Devil ſeduces you, and your own Heart deceives you, that you may go on inſenſibly to eternal Damnation: For none ſhall be ſaved but by Chriſt, and he teaches all Chriſtians *to deny themſelves.* And elſewhere he ſays (*i*), *that he that ſaves his Life, ſhall loſe it; and he that loſes his Life, the ſame ſhall find it:* as if he had ſaid, that he who is ſo careful of his

(h) *Rev.* xviii. 7. (i) *Matth.* x. 39.

Health,

Health, in taking his Eaſe and Pleaſures, ſhall aſſuredly loſe his Soul: and he who even loſeth his Life to overcome his Corruption, ſhall ſave his Soul in a Life of eternal Bliſs: for it is alſo written (*k*), that *unleſs a grain of Corn die, it bringeth not forth Fruit.* It is neceſſary then that this Corruption of Man be cruſhed and killed by the mortification of the Senſes, elſe the Soul ſhall never arrive at Salvation, nor bring *forth Fruits worthy of Repentance.*

§. 69. Wherefore, my Friend, do not ſuffer your ſelf to be ſeduced any longer by falſe Appearances: For you are out of the way of Salvation, ſo long as you follow your natural Inclinations, ſeeing it is written (*l*), *that Fleſh and Blood ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* And it can be nothing but Fleſh and Blood that makes you ſeek ſo earneſtly your Eaſe and Conveniencies, while you ſtill complain that you have not enough of them. For ſometimes your Chamber is too light, ſometimes it is too dark; ſometimes your Bed has an ill Smell, and the Cloaths are too heavy, the Sheets are not clean enough, a Mouſe diſturbs you; there is hardly any Meat that pleaſes your Taſte, the Sugar-Sops they bring you are not ſweet enough, and you muſt have more Sugar: and no ſooner is any little Buſineſs recommended to you, as to gather the Beans in the Garden, but preſently you make as if you were Sick, and you deſire to live Idly, or to do that only which is pleaſing and agreeable to corrupt Nature: In ſhort, you are a Man altogether ſenſual: For if you were a regenerate Perſon, as you believe you are, you would be void of all thoſe carnal Deſires and Cares; you would take all in good part, eſteeming your ſelf unworthy even of neceſſary Things; you would rather ſerve than be ſerved, and rather Work than ſit Idle. For my part, I do this with a willing Heart, and wiſh I could labor ſix times more to help my Neighbor. And ſo far am I from taking Pleaſure in Meat and Drink, and in other Things that are pleaſing to Nature; that all theſe things are rather troubleſome to me: I uſe them with Regret, and only for Neceſſity. For it would be impoſſible for a regenerate Soul to take any Delight in Earthly Things; theſe rather oppreſs it, like a heavy Burthen; Wealth, Honors and Pleaſures are a Burthen to it: it even deſires with St. *Paul* to be delivered from the Bondage of this preſent Life, that it may flie to its God, trampling under Foot the Delights of this World, as things unworthy of it, and

(k) *Joh.* xii. 24. (l) 1 *Cor.* xv. 50.

which are ſo far from being delightful, that they are hateful to it.

§. 70. By this we may diſcern the State of a Soul truly regenerated from one who ſtill lives according to the Inclinations of corrupt Nature; according as one is delighted in the Pleaſures of this Life, or as he Deſpiſes and Rejects them, even tho' he might lawfully have them. For one that is regenerate does no longer ſeek after any thing in this World; this the Apoſtle confirms, when he ſays (*m*), *If you be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above, and not the things which are upon the Earth.* This he inculcates unto Chriſtians, that they may not let themſelves be ſeduc'd by the deceitfulneſs of their Hearts, which perſwades them to believe that they are regenerate while they ſtill ſeek after the Riches and Pleaſures of this Life. And that theſe Perſons may try themſelves aright, the Apoſtle tells them, that the Mark or Touchſtone which makes it appear whether the Regeneration be true or falſe, is, that every one ſearch to the bottom of his own Heart, and ſee *whether he ſeeks any thing more in this World, and whether all his Thoughts and Cares be diverted toward things Heavenly and Eternal.* If ſo, he may be perſwaded that he belongs to the bleſſed Society of the Regenerate, and no otherwiſe. For he who is yet deſirous to have a fine Houſe, coſtly Furniture, a ſoft Bed, Meat to pleaſe his Taſte, and the other Delights of his Senſes, Wealth, or Honors, or Attendants, and the other Things with which Nature is delighted, he cannot truly affirm or believe, that he is a regenerate Perſon, ſeeing he yet ſeeks thoſe things that are upon Earth, and not thoſe things which are above, and which are Eternal.

§. 71. I can ſay truly, that I have found by my own Experience, that as ſoon as the Holy Spirit did fully poſſeſs my Soul, all the things which I loved in this World were ſhut out of my Heart and Affections. And the LOVE OF GOD diſſolved in me all Love of earthly Things, as the Snow is melted before the Sun or the Fire: So that I cannot ſay in Truth, that my Affections are now plac'd upon any thing on Earth: Yea, I am no longer fond or deſirous of Health or Life, but am entirely reſign'd to God, that he may govern me at his Pleaſure. Thus I am always content, and I never wiſh for that which I have not: and if it happen that I have a good Lodging, and the Conveniencies of Life, I uſe them; neither do I as the Hypocrites, who will not wear ſuch Cloaths

(*m*) *Col.* iii. 1.

as are generally uſed, nor dwell in Houſes that are well built, but outwardly they reject all good and fine things, to ſhew their Virtue and Holineſs; which is nothing but a ſhew, conſiſting in a diſtinct ſort of Apparel, and ſuch outward Trifles. No, I ſeek neither Poverty, nor Riches, nor good Fare, nor that which is common: but I take all that's given me from the Hand of God: If it is good, I take it as ſuch; and if it does not taſte agreeably, I take it to nouriſh my Body, without any Choice, being content with every thing: and when it happens that I muſt lie in a naſty Garret or a Stable, I do not murmur at it, but I am as contented to lye upon the hard Floor as on a ſoft Bed, when there is occaſion for it. I am as well pleas'd with Sickneſs, as with Health. When God is pleas'd to afflict me, I accept of it for the purification of my Soul; and when he comforts me, I praiſe him for it. Thus I ſtill find matter of Contentment, becauſe I have no longer any Deſire or Will of my own. Nothing can be wanting to me, ſince I deſire nothing but that which I have. My Soul is content and ſatisfied with it, without deſiring more, and in this State I find a foretaſte of Paradiſe, conſiſting in a contentment and quiet of Mind and Conſcience, which quenches the deſire of any earthly thing, and gives me Tranquility and Peace in all kind of Events. Whereas I ſee thoſe poor Souls who will needs do their own Will, and follow the Inclinations of their corrupt Nature, ſtill reſtleſs and diſſatisfied, melancholy and vex'd, becauſe they have not what they deſire, troubled that they have not Wealth and Honor according to their Wiſh; envying others thoſe Advantages; impatient in Adverſity or Sickneſs; ſtill ſeeking Satisfaction, and never finding it. Thus I had a Siſter who ſtudied in all things to pleaſe herſelf, and I never ſaw her content. She had indeed wherewith to afford all ſort of Conveniency, Reſt and Delight to her Body; and yet truly ſhe enjoyed none of theſe. She never ſlept ſoundly, being ſtill afraid to be contemned, or loſe the Honor that ſhe thought was due to her. And for Pleaſure, ſhe went and viſited ſeveral Cities and Country Places, whence ſhe reap'd nothing but Wearineſs, and little Satisfaction. And ſhe ſpared nothing, that ſhe might pleaſe her Taſte; ſhe contriv'd Daily ſome new thing to excite her Appetite; and ſhe no ſooner once taſted it, but ſhe diſguſted it, and turned to ſome other thing. And thus this poor Soul ſtudied continually to gratify her five natural Senſes; and yet could never pleaſe them; for the more ſhe had, ſhe ſtill deſired the more. So that I conſider'd her Life here as the beginning of her Hell; for I can-

cannot imagine a greater Torment, than that of an unquiet and never ſatisfied Mind, when all its pretended Pleaſures give it no Content, but only amuſe the Senſes for a ſmall Moment, and ſo ſoon as that Momentary Pleaſure is gone, it leaves behind it Sadneſs and Melancholy. I would have often comforted her, but in vain, for Melancholy had ſtill the Aſcendant, till ſhe run to new Diverſions, and theſe brought on more Sadneſs. And thus this poor Soul remain'd diſcontented till Death, after having purſued in vain with great Earneſtneſs all ſort of Pleaſures and Satisfactions. From this all thoſe may take Warning who chuſe their Paradiſe in this World, where they find nothing but a temporal Hell, the Forerunner of that which is Eternal.

§. 72. I wiſh, my Friend, you may become wiſe by the Example of others, and that you would firmly believe, that your Life is not Chriſtian, and that you are not truly regenerate, but that you indulge your ſenſual Appetites, and ſeek your Eaſe and Pleaſure, chuſing always for your ſelf the beſt and the fineſt of every thing as much as you can. Perhaps the Devil perſwades you that this is your Duty, and that you ought to have the beſt Place and Accommodations, and conſequently the beſt Fare, and the beſt Service, becauſe you are a Spiritual Perſon, for whom all good and beautiful Things were created. I know others like you, who imagined there was nothing which they did not merit, becauſe of their Vertue; among others, I knew a Country Girl, who wore white Sattin, and would eat of nothing but the moſt delicious Fare; for ſhe ſaid, *They were created for her, and not for the Wicked.* This Perſwaſion came from the evil Spirit, and from corrupt Nature, which ſtill flatters it ſelf to its own Ruin. For where was there ever one more ſpiritual, more holy, and more perfect in this World, than Chriſt, to whom every beautiful and good thing was due? And yet he choſe the meaneſt and moſt deſpiſed things for his own Uſe. For where could he have a meaner Mother, than the poor Virgin *Mary*? Or a meaner nurſing Father, than a Carpenter? Where could there be a more contemptible and inconvenient Houſe for him to be born in, than a Stable? Where more abject Perſons could he pitch upon to viſit him at his Entry into the World, than poor Shepherds? He who might have choſen for himſelf the greateſt Kings and Emperors of the Earth, with the moſt ſtately Palaces in the World, with ſoft Beds, and ſuch like Conveniencies, contents himſelf with a little Hay and a Manger for his Pavilion. And who ſees not that he ſought not his Eaſe and Quiet in this World,

when

when he labour'd and travell'd ſo much for the Benefit of Men? His Fare was Bread and Fiſh, broil'd on the Coals on the Ground, as it is told in the Goſpel, *That he fed Multitudes of Man, Women and Children with Bread and Fiſhes.* And when his Diſciples provided Victuals for him, it was Bread only, and not dainty Morſels, or Sawces ſuited to the Taſte of corrupt Nature. For they did not carry about with them neither Pots nor Frying-Pans, nor Fat nor Cream, nor a Cauldron for Brewing, nor a Wine-preſs for their Grapes. They were contented to make the Fire upon the Ground, and then broil the Fiſhes, which they had caught in the Sea. Hence it abundantly appears, that Chriſt did not lead a ſoft and ſenſual Life, as the Chriſtians of this Age believe they may do, and that they may chuſe the fineſt and the beſt of every thing for their Uſe: By which they become Antichriſtians, ſince their Words, Doctrine and Lives directly contradict the Sayings, Doctrine and Life of Chriſt, who ſaid unto them, *Be ye Followers of me: Follow me,* (n) *I am the Way; by me if any Man ſhall enter, he ſhall be ſaved: I am the Door, no Man cometh to the Father but by me.*

§. 73. But Men now-a-days have invented Doctrines contrary to that of Chriſt, and they would lead to Salvation by another Way than that in which our Lord Jeſus walk'd, and wherein he taught Men to follow him: They wreſt the true Meaning of the Goſpel by their Gloſſes and Explanations; ſo that it muſt be quite croſs'd out and cancell'd before one can believe the Coiners of thoſe new Doctrines. And when the Goſpel is truly repreſented to them in its genuine Simplicity, they ſay, *That theſe things ought not to be obſerved now in this Age*; as if God were mutable, and had changed his Thoughts ſince the time that Chriſt taught us this holy Goſpel, as the laſt Remedy appointed for our Maladies, after which we muſt not look for another, for he came in the laſt Times. It ſtill was, and ever will be neceſſary for Salvation to the End of the World, to obſerve in Subſtance the Doctrine of the Goſpel, the only Scope and Aim whereof is to recover Men again unto the LOVE OF GOD, which is the firſt and great Commandment, without which there is no Salvation, as I have clearly ſhewn in the Beginning of this Letter.

§. 74. And I bring no new thing, neither do I deſire to make a new Goſpel, but I repreſent to Chriſtians the ſame Goſpel which was given them from God by Jeſus Chriſt in the Beginning of the Primitive Church, when Men were

(n) *John* xiv. 6.

taught

taught by our Saviour how they muſt be born again into the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, that they may become new Creatures; putting off the Garment of the Old *Adam*, that they may be cloathed with the New, which is Jeſus Chriſt. For as *Adam* had undone us all by his Fall, ſo Jeſus Chriſt has recover'd us all out of this Perdition by his Evangelical Doctrine, which we muſt follow, and into which our Hearts and Lives muſt be transformed, if we would be ſaved, without hearkening to the Gloſſes and Doctrines of deceitful Men, (o) *Who ſhut the Kingdom of Heaven againſt others, neither will they ever enter into it themſelves.*

§. 75. I know very well, that thoſe Pedants and pretended Scholars make the People believe, that *I ſet up Hereſies and new Doctrines*, though this is moſt falſe: For I deſire nothing of any Man, but that he would follow in Practice the Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, which is neither New nor Heretical. But theſe Scholars call every thing *Hereſie* that does not afford them temporal Advantage; and they call every thing *Piety* and *Vertue* that fills their Purſes, and makes the Pot boil; ſo ſtrangely are Men become Liars and Seducers of Souls, as the Apoſtle foretold, that *they ſhould come in the latter times*, (in which we now live) wherein the Seduction is the more perilous, the more it is covered with Piety and Devotion, *for deceiving even the Elect*, as the Scripture ſaith.

§. 76. And when I ſaw that ſo many periſh'd through Ignorance, being ſeduced by thoſe who call themſelves Ambaſſadors from God, I reſolved to publiſh this Treatiſe of *the Renovation of the Goſpel-Spirit*, which flatters no Body, but points out the true Meaning of the Goſpel to thoſe who would put it in Practice; for they who will not practiſe it, are not capable of Underſtanding it, or of conceiving its true Meaning. To ſuch I will not offer *this hidden Treaſure*, or *this Pearl of great Price*; but only to thoſe who deſire to become true Chriſtians, and to none elſe: For this would be *to give the Childrens Bread to the Dogs, and to caſt Pearls before Swine* (p), which I will not do, for Jeſus Chriſt has forbidden it. I wait for Souls diſpos'd to obey and practiſe the Doctrine of the Goſpel. For my Writings will ſerve for a greater Condemnation to thoſe who have them, or may have them; for then they cannot pretend Ignorance, after having read them; becauſe they explain more clearly the Doctrine of the Goſpel, than it is expreſs'd in the Goſpel it ſelf, or in any other Au-

(o) *Matth.* xxiii. 13. (p) *Matth.* vii. 6.

thors,

thors, who in divers manners have ſpoken or written of Evangelical Perfection.

§. 77. Wherefore none can periſh any longer through Ignorance, ſeeing God now ſo plainly declares the Ends for which he created Man, the Graces and Privileges he gave him at his Creation, and how Man of his own Choice loſt all theſe Gifts and Favors, and by his Sin has made himſelf more miſerable than the very Beaſts are in their bruiſh Nature. But that which is moſt valuable, and chiefly to be regarded is that God now imparts to Men ſo clear a Light, for diſcovering the Way that leads ſtrait to the Harbor of Salvation, by which Chriſt walk'd, and *thus entred into his Glory*; ſo that none can any longer be ignorant of what they muſt do to be ſaved, while they ſee that Chriſt has in ſo particular a manner done and taught all things neceſſary, that nothing more remains for Chriſtians to know or ask. This is the Time of which the Scripture ſpeaks (q), *When a Man ſhall ſay no more to his Brother, Know the Lord; for all ſhall know him*: That is, all they who deſire in Sincerity to receive the Truth. They ſhall ſee by theſe Writings that there is no other God, but he whom I know; nor other Truth, but that which I declare; nor any other Way of Salvation, but that wherein I walk; and that my Doctrine is not mine, but the true Doctrine of Chriſt, which the Lord himſelf taught Chriſtians; and that I am very far from teaching Hereſies, or pernicious Doctrines, as thoſe Scholars would perſwade the ignorant People (who have no Knowledge of Divine Truths,) that they may draw them to themſelves, ſeeking nothing but Glory and Gain from Men, even to the Prejudice of the Salvation of their Souls, which thoſe Maſters have leſs Regard for than for their Temporal Advantages.

§. 78. Hence they have contriv'd ſo many Gloſſes, Diſtinctions, and falſe Reaſonings, whereby to obſcure the Doctrine of the Goſpel, that this is no longer put in Practice, while every one imagines, according to the Sentence of theſe Doctors, that it is impoſſible to keep the Goſpel-Law, though Jeſus Chriſt ſaid, *Take my Yoke upon you, for it is eaſie, and my Burthen is light.* Men now-a-days are become ſo blind by the Gloſſes of the Learned, that they give more Faith to their lying Reaſonings, than to the infallible Truths of Chriſt himſelf. Which proceeds from this, that being deſirous to live according to the Inclinations of their corrupt Nature, they find the Doctrine of Men more agreable to this, than the Do-

(q) Jer. xxxi. 34.

ctrine of Chriſt, which is directly contrary to this corrupt Nature.

§. 79. For the whole Goſpel is nothing but a Weapon, or Sword, wherewith to combat, yea to kill this Old Man, that the New Man, which is the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, may live again in place thereof: For he ſaith (r), *Unleſs ye be born again of Water and of the Spirit, ye ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Now none can be born again, unleſs he firſt die: And thus alſo none can be born again into the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, if he is not firſt dead to the Deſires of his corrupt Nature. It is vain to hope for it, and Folly to believe it. Of Neceſſity Death (which is Corruption) muſt be firſt thruſt out, before the true Life enter into a Soul, which can never live to Grace, if its corrupt Nature is not mortified, yea, and entirely dead to it ſelf. And this Corruption cannot be mortified nor overcome, but by the Practice of the Goſpel-Law, which oppoſes and overcomes all the Inclinations of corrupt Nature. This is the only Reaſon for which Chriſt brought us this Divine Law, as a wholſome Poiſon to deſtroy this old Corruption, and an Antidote againſt the Evil which may happen to our Souls during this mortal Life, while ſome are ſo wretched as to affirm, *That the Goſpel-Law cannot be kept.*

§. 80. Theſe are the falſe Prophets, of whom the Scripture warns us, *That we ought to beware of them, and not let our ſelves be deceived by them.* I know indeed, (and to my great Sorrow) that they have already ſeduced many; but I hope they ſhall no longer ſeduce thoſe who ſhall comprehend the Truths contain'd in my Writings, ſeeing *they are the Seed of the Woman which muſt bruiſe the Head of the Serpent.* Certainly thoſe falſe Teachers have had the evil Spirit for their Maſter, who hath ſuggeſted to them ſo many Sophiſms and falſe Reaſonings, whereby Men are deceiv'd: And that old Serpent, who tempted *Eve to know Good and Evil*, does now tempt thoſe Learned Scholars and Doctors to ſearch after vain, falſe and frivolous Knowledge: For I think, that in Colleges and Univerſities they ſtudy nothing ſo much as to make Falſhood paſs for Truth, and Truth for Falſhood; and when they have learned to do this dexterouſly, they get the Degree of Maſter, Batchelor, or Doctor, and paſs for Learned Men, though as to their own and the Peoples Salvation they are great Ignorants, yea ill Men, who wickedly miſlead others.

(r) *John* iii. 5.

§. 81. For

§. 81. For many of thoſe cannot but know, that they do not teach the People the real Truth of the Goſpel, but wreſt and darken it by their Gloſſes, that they may ſuit their Doctrine to the Looſeneſs of the People. But this will not excuſe them before God, however they may think they do well to accommodate themſelves to the Weakneſs of the Men of this Age: But if they would ſearch to the Bottom of their Conſciences to know the Reaſon why they thus accommodate themſelves to the World, they would aſſuredly find, that this is only to preſerve Mens Favour and Friendſhip, and that they may have from them wherewith to live a ſoft and eaſie Life in this World. For if they would preach the Truth, they could not continue to live plentifully, to provide ſuch ſtately Houſes and fine Furniture, and to have their Tables furniſh'd with ſuch delicious Fare: Then they muſt quit thoſe Exceſſes, and be contented with Neceſſaries only. This they will not hear of; but they love rather to get Money by amuſing People, than to be out of Favour with Men, by preaching the Truth to them. This is indeed very lamentable, that they prefer their Gain, their Eaſe, their Honor and Pleaſure in this World to their own and other Mens Salvation; yet the chief Guides of the People do this now-a-days.

§. 82. For there are many who not only diſſemble, gloſs away, and wreſt the Truth of the Goſpel, that they may pleaſe Men, and for fear of loſing their Offices and Benefices; but they perſecute the Truth, whereſoever it appears. This I know by my own Experience: For I no ſooner began to publiſh the Truths manifeſted unto me by God, than the Prieſts of all Sects and Religions roſe up againſt me, loaded me with Reproaches and Contempt, purſued me to Impriſonment, yea to Death, if I had been in their Power. They robb'd me of my Books to the Value of Thouſands, made me be condemned to perpetual Impriſonment, yea the *Lutheran* Prieſts of *Flensbourg* caus'd my Books to be burnt publickly in the Market-place of that Town, by the Hand of the Hangman, for no other Reaſon, but that they contain'd the Truths of God, and taught Men to obſerve the Goſpel-Law. For no Body can diſcover evil things in my Writings, they being indicted by the Holy Spirit, who is Sanctity it ſelf. But thoſe angry Preachers would extinguiſh this holy Light, fearing leſt it croſs them in their Purpoſe *of reigning in this World, of having Dominion over the People, and of treaſuring up of Wealth*; in which my Writings do not favour them. They cry out therefore, as the *Jews* did againſt Chriſt,

Away

Away with him, away with him, crucifie him. And if it be ſaid to them, What Evil has this Maid done? Shall we kill one of a good Life, who declares the Truth of the Goſpel. As the Judge ſaid to the People, *Shall I crucifie your King?* And the People anſwer'd, *They had no King but* Cæſar. Thus alſo, if thoſe Preachers would ſpeak Truth, they will anſwer, *We have no other Goſpel, but that which we will gloſs and interpret for our own Profit, that we may draw the People after us, and may be maintain'd by them.* Behold the wretched State of the Chriſtian World now-a-days, wherein the Clergy are not ſatisfied not to follow the Truth themſelves, but they labor alſo to keep others from embracing it, like unto the Devil, who is not pleas'd to be miſerable alone, but draws in as many as he can to be Partners in his Miſery. I can ſay truly, that thoſe Clergy-men *perſecute me for Righteouſneſs ſake*; for I never in my Life did Things blameable before Men; yea, thoſe Preachers in *Holſtein*, my Enemies, were obliged oft-times to preach publickly, *That I led a pious Life, and that thoſe of my Company were good People, who lived ſoberly and chaſtly, and in all things behaved themſelves modeſtly and honeſtly.* Not that they gave this Teſtimony from a Spirit of Juſtice and Truth; but they found themſelves obliged to do it, becauſe ſo many good People in that Country had ſeen our Behavior, we having tarried there about Seven Years, and were much edified with our manner of Living. They no doubt would have blam'd thoſe Preachers for perſecuting honeſt and good People.

§. 83. For this cauſe they ſpoke well of us as to our Manners; but they added that my Doctrine was full of Hereſies, that by this means they might blind well-meaning People, who could not judge aright as to Doctrine, they falſely affirming to them: *that I deny the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, and the moſt Holy Trinity*, and that I teach a great many other ill things, of which I am altogether Innocent. For if I denied the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, I would not ſtir up Men to imitate and follow him, that they may be partakers of his Merits: and I would not declare it neceſſary for Salvation to embrace the Doctrine of the Goſpel, if I rejected or deſpiſed the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt who taught us this Doctrine.

§. 84. For if the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt ſav'd Men, after the manner they teach now adays, his whole Law and Precepts would be to no purpoſe: yea he would have ſuffered and died without giving any ſuch Precepts to Men, for there was no need of them, when Jeſus Chriſt would ſatisfy all for them, without any coo-peration on their part. This had

been a new Creation of Man, not a Regeneration of him, which ſuppoſeth a thing already generated; but being fallen away or corrupted, muſt be again reſtored and repaired; which reparation cannot be done without the concurrence and co-operation of the thing already created: for it is moſt true, that God who created us without our ſelves, will not ſave us without our ſelves. How then ſhould the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt ſave us without our ſelves; ſeeing even God by his Almighty Power cannot ſave us without our cooperation, after he would once have us free Creatures; for he never retracts what he has once willed? Wherefore all the Gloſſes and Arguments which Men do frame now adays about the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, are the Forgeries and Deceits of corrupt Nature, which flatters it ſelf to its own Ruin, ſince Men have loſt the light of Truth whereby to know, that *Man was created for no other end but to love God.* For we ſee that they who look to be ſaved by the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt alone, live and die in Self-love, and ſeek after the Pleaſures and good Things of this wretched Life as much as they can, and boldly hope for Salvation while they reſiſt all the Deſigns and Purpoſes which God had in the creating of Man. This is ſo groſs a kind of Ignorance, that it is a wonder how ſo much as one Man could entertain thoſe Opinions without diſcovering their Falſhood. For it would have been to no purpoſe for Chriſt and his Apoſtles to have preach'd and taught ſo much, if his Merits only might and could ſave Men. There would have been no need to preach the Goſpel, nor to write the Bible and other good Books, nor to know what Chriſt did and taught. It would have ſufficed Men to have conceived in their corrupt Imagination, that Chriſt had ſatisfied all for them, and thus in a fantaſtical Way to have applied to themſelves his Merits. I cannot believe that they who entertain ſuch Opinions can die in Peace, unleſs they be entirely given up by God unto the Spirit of Error, and the Devil give them a falſe Quiet, till paſſing out of this Life, they be tortured with double Torments hereafter to all Eternity.

§. 85. I had a mind, my Friend, to tell you all theſe things, not for your ſake only, but for all thoſe who follow (as you do) the Motions of their corrupt Natures, that they may learn to know themſelves, and may not let themſelves be trick'd and impos'd upon by Satan, or by wicked Men, who ſecond him in hindring the Salvation of their Souls. Believe me, ſeeing I ſpeak Truth, and aſſert by a Command from God, that never any was, is, or ſhall be ſaved, unleſs he die in the LOVE OF GOD, and that no Man lives in *the*

Love of God, who lives in Self-love. Wherefore Men muſt lift up the Head, and hear what God ſaith to them in theſe laſt Times, namely, (s) *Awake thou that ſleepeſt; ariſe from the Dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee Light.* You are one of thoſe dead ones, and many ſuch as you. It concerns you all to conſider, whether you will chuſe to periſh in the Darkneſs of Death, or to ariſe out of it: For the time is come of which the Prophet ſpoke, ſaying, (t) *Darkneſs hath covered the whole Earth, and groſs Darkneſs the People:* But withal he gives great Comfort to thoſe who ſincerely labor to become the People of God, ſaying, (t) *But the Lord ſhall ariſe upon thee, and his Glory ſhall be ſeen upon thee.* The Prophet ſpeaks neither to *John*, nor to *Peter*, *For with God there is no Reſpect of Perſons*; but he ſpeaks particularly to all thoſe who deſire to become the Children of God, ceaſing to be the Children of Wrath and Perdition, that they may become the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt. Theſe ſhall receive the Light of Truth, and ſhall enjoy the Glory of the Lord: But not they, who following ſtill the Senſualities of corrupt Nature, dare yet promiſe to themſelves Salvation by the Merits of Chriſt, and apply his Merits to themſelves, which do not at all belong to them: (u) *For he who is not born again into the Spirit of Chriſt, ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, whatever he may fancy or imagine to himſelf, or howſoever he may ſtrive to apply to himſelf the Merits of Chriſt. This will avail him nothing in the Day of Judgment, when it ſhall be ſaid, *Behold the Man and his Works*: And not, *Behold the Man and his fine Speculations, or frivolous Application of the Merits of Chriſt.* The Matter it ſelf muſt be ſearch'd into, and it muſt be ſeen if a Man has truly put on the Wedding-Garment of the Spirit of Chriſt, without which *he ſhall be thruſt out from the Marriage-Feaſt, and caſt into outer Darkneſs, wher ſhall be Weeping and Gnaſhing of Teeth.* But for the Souls that ſeek truly to be converted unto God, and embrace a Goſpel-Life, the Light of Truth is ariſen upon them to make known all Truth, and the Glory of the Moſt High ſhall cover them, which ſhall fill them with all kind of Delights and Glories, as the Prophet has foretold, (x) for they *ſhall be the People of God, he will guide them, and make them to lie down in green Paſtures.* But how few Souls are there now-a-days thus diſpos'd to let themſelves be led and govern'd by the Holy Spirit, ſo as that they may be truly call'd God's People?

(s) *Eph.* v. 14. (t) *Iſai.* lx. 2. (u) *John* iii. 3. (x) *Pſal.* xxiii.

§. 86. I

§. 86. I know very well, my Friend, that you will tell me, you are of that Number, and that you desire to subject your self to be directed and led by God; which is most false, so long as you (with so many others) do yet follow the Inclinations of corrupt Nature. All these Professions are false, and your Words and Discourses are affected and contrived, through Hypocrisie, that you may be thought to have the Vertue which you have not. This God will not suffer. For this it was that Christ in the Gospel utter'd so many Woes against the *Pharisees*, who boasted of the Vertue which they had not. How often did he proclaim, *Wo, wo to you, who are like to whited Sepulchres, which indeed appear outwardly beautiful, but are within full of dead Mens Bones, and of all Uncleanness* (y). The same Woes will in the Day of Judgment come upon all those, who now suffer themselves to be seduced with their own Imaginations, following the Suggestions of their deceitful Hearts, as the Scripture saith, *That Man's Heart is deceitful above all things.* For my part, I had rather see an open Sinner, than a holy Hypocrite; for there is more Hopes of the Conversion of a known and publick Sinner, than of a counterfeit Bigot, who deceives both himself and others, to his Ruin, without being sensible of it. His Mind is so blinded with thick Darkness, that he even desires not to have any other Light than what he fancies he has. I can scarce hope, my Friend, for the Conversion of such, and of you; but may rather look for such *Woes* and Calamities, as our Lord threatned the *Pharisees* with in his Time.

§. 87. For truly he is a Hypocrite, who says that he loves God, when he loves himself, and is still wedded to the Riches, Pleasures and Conveniencies of this Life; since the *Love of God* is a certain Fire, that consumes all those Earthly-Affections. It is impossible that a Soul, which truly loves God, can yet take its Delight in Eating, Drinking, Recreations, Apparel, or other Earthly Goods and Pleasures, because it uses all these things as if it used them not, and oft-times makes use of necessary things with Regret: As they write that Mother *Teresa* did often weep when she was going to the Table to take her Refreshment, saying to her self, *Must I always do the Actions of Beasts?* Thus they who love God have an Aversion to the Pleasures and good Things of this Life, and delight themselves only in God, whom they love. But if you, my Friend, (with so many others who pretend to love God) would narrowly examine the Bent and Motions of your Souls,

(y) *Matth.* xxiii. 27.

and wherein they take Delight, you would assuredly discover that the greatest part of your Inclinations is to delight your self in good Fare, good Liquor, a soft Bed, and a convenient Lodging; and that you embrace all these things with Delight and Pleasure; while in the mean time you fancy to your self that you love God. Which Perswasion is false and deceitful; for the *Love of God* is incompatible with the Love of Earthly Things. By which you (and all such as you) may see unto what Degree of the Love of God you are already come; for this is the Touchstone, whereby one may discover the true Gold of the LOVE OF GOD from the false Gold of this imaginary Love, which oft-times appears more bright and shining than the pure Gold of the *Love of God*; as a counterfeit Ducat appears sometimes to the Eye more bright and glistering, than a Ducat of pure Gold, till it is rubb'd upon the Touchstone, and then the Cheat is discover'd.

§. 88. I believe, my Friend, the same has happen'd to you, and that your deceitful Heart has perswaded you, e're you came to live with us, that you was possess'd of the *Love of God*, because this is honorable, and procures Esteem among Men. Of this you have Experience, whilst you see so many good People are helpful to you, who out of the Esteem they have of your Vertue, do not suffer you to lack any thing, and from time to time send you Money in abundance for your Subsistence. But this Bounty encourages you in Idleness and Sloth, and makes you desire still to have the finest and best of every thing; neither will you be satisfied with the Meat and Drink, which even very rich Men are pleas'd with; who give Thanks to the Heavenly Giver of all Good for those things which you have oft-times despis'd and slighted; as with Disdain you rejected t'other Day our Brother's Apron to wipe your Hands with, but called for a fine clean Handkerchief to be given you out of your Chest. Now, if I had not all these Circumstances and particular Instances to shew you of your Self-love and your Self-esteem, you would no doubt contradict the Truth of God, as you have done often heretofore, when I admonish'd you; saying, *That you appeal'd to the Judgment of God, and did not regard Mens Judgment*, tho' more enlightned than you; *That I might say what I pleas'd; but you knew very well what you ought to do*: Though truly you do not know that the Devil leads and governs you in all your Actions; while in the mean time you are possest with the Imagination of your being vertuous,

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and that temporal Advantages accrue to you by this imaginary Vertue.

§. 89. This will render your Converſion ſo much the more difficult, while in the mean time you can never be ſaved (no more than others like you) except you be converted, and receive the Light of Truth, which now offers it ſelf to all thoſe, who are willing to receive it, and to none elſe: For that which Chriſt ſaith is now fulfill'd in its full Senſe and Meaning, *viz.* (z) *This is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men have loved Darkneſs rather than Light,* Thus all they who ſhall deſpiſe, and will not follow this laſt Light, are condemned already; becauſe they love rather their Darkneſs (which has now overſpread the whole Earth) than the Light of Faith, which is now come into the World, and *which ſo many holy Prophets have deſired to ſee, and have not ſeen it.* Thoſe who now ſee it, and do nevertheleſs abide in their Darkneſs (becauſe it does more flatter their Corruption, have already received their Sentence of Condemnation, neither can they look for any other thing after Death than Eternal Damnation, ſince they would needs wilfully abide in their wandring Courſes and in their Darkneſs.

§. 90. It concerns you, my Friend, and all thoſe who follow the Motions of corrupt Nature, to know, whether you deſire to be ſaved or damned, ſeeing you cannot be ſaved without embracing and following this Light of Truth; as you cannot be damned but by following your own Darkneſs, and the Inclinations of your corrupt Nature. It is your part to chuſe the one or the other. Behold Heaven and Hell, Salvation and Damnation, and you are placed in the midſt; tell me which of them you will chuſe and follow, (a) *Since no Man can ſerve Two Maſters, but he muſt hate the one, and love the other.* You cannot amuſe God with Words, as Men may amuſe one another; for by an immutable Decree he has condemn'd thoſe who love their Darkneſs more than the Light; which Light is come into the World to enlighten all thoſe who are willing to follow it: I ſay, *are willing* to follow it, becauſe God compels no Man, but leaves every one in that Liberty in which he was pleaſed to create him.

§. 91. He who would die in the *Love of God*, ought to embrace the Means which Chriſt hath taught us, ſince there is no other way that leads to Salvation, but that wherein he walked, which is the *Mortification of corrupt Nature*: This he practiſed even to the Death of the Croſs, and ſuffered ſo many

(z) *John* iii. 19. (a) *Matth.* vi. 24.

Afflictions and Pains in Body and Spirit, that in the extremity of his Anguiſh, he thought he was deprived of all Help, when he ſaid (*b*) *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me.* And tho' Chriſtians know the Hiſtory of this, and that our Lord ſaid unto them (*c*), *I have done all theſe things to give you an Example, follow me*; yet they will needs enter into Glory by ſome other way than that by which Chriſt himſelf walked, giving looſe Reins to their ſenſual Appetites, and the Inclinations of their corrupt Nature, and yet withal imagine that they ſhall be ſaved thro' the Merits of Chriſt, as if he had merited for ſupporting Man's Corruption, which is ſo much the Enemy of God, reſiſting his Purpoſes, and contradicting his moſt holy Will. Is not this an excellent Diſpoſition for partaking of the Merits of Chriſt? Truly, my Friend, you muſt rid your ſelf of this Sentiment, and reſolve to lead a Goſpel-Life, if you deſire to enjoy a bleſſed Immortality, ſeeing without this none ſhall be ſaved, howſoever Great, Powerful, enlightned or vertuous they may be: none ſhall enter into Paradiſe, but they who are cloathed with the Spirit of Chriſt. You ought not to flatter your ſelf to your own Ruin with the Diſcourſes and Gloſſes of Men, who would falſely apply to themſelves the Merits of Chriſt, while they remain his Enemies, and act quite contrary to what he has Taught us, and which he is pleas'd now again to teach us by his holy Spirit, who now comes to lead us into all Truth, thus fulfilling the Prophetical Promiſe which he made to his Apoſtles and Diſciples, when he left them, and aſcended up into Heaven (*d*). Upon us this LIGHT of TRUTH is poured out in ſo great abundance; and if we will embrace and follow it, we ſhall aſſuredly behold the GLORY of Chriſt; after having followed him in Reproaches and Sufferings; for there is no other way to accompany him in his Glory. Many, it is likely, will be glad to hear thoſe things which are ſpoken concerning him in his Glory, becauſe theſe are agreeable even to corrupt Nature, which greatly loves ſweet and beautiful things: But this is a vain Delight in thoſe who will not paſs firſt by the way of his Sufferings: By theſe only there is an Entry into his *Glory*, and by no other Doors or Windows; for all Entry into it ſhall be ſhut againſt thoſe who ſhall follow their Eaſe and Pleaſures in this World; to whom he will ſay, as to the fooliſh Virgins; *I know you not*: keeping the Door ſhut againſt them. For no Man ſhall abide in the *Glory* of Mount

(b) *Matth.* xxvii. 46. (c) *John* xiii. 15. 1 *Pet.* ii. 21.
(d) *John* xiv.

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TABOR, if he has not firſt dwelt with Chriſt upon Mount *Calvary*. This is an irrevocable Decreè of God, which ſhall never be changed: namely, whoſoever has ſinn'd, muſt be chaſtiſed; and he that would rejoice, muſt ſuffer.

§. 92. This has mov'd me to write this Book of the *Evangelical Spirit*, to the end that every one may know the true and ſure way to Salvation, that they may no longer truſt to ſo many wrong Ways, by which Men now adays lead one another. For there is but one only Way, one only Truth, and one only true Church; namely, that which teaches the Goſpel-Law. But becauſe Men are now fallen from this only Truth, and have ſtrayed from this only Way, having abandon'd this only true Church which Chriſt eſtabliſhed when he was upon Earth; therefore thoſe Wanderers ſeek to kill me, ſaying, *that I advance Hereſies*: as if Chriſt had been the Chief of all Hereticks; and as if they who deſire to embrace his Doctrine again, were Diſciples of Errors: whereas they ought rather to obſerve that it is the Chriſtians of this Age who are miſled, and that Satan is now entred into the Sanctuary in Chriſt's Place, and makes himſelf to be worſhipped as if he were Chriſt, while indeed he is Antichriſt, directly oppoſite to the Doctrine of Chriſt, though yet many do follow him as if he were Chriſt.

§. 93. And they are his Adherents who will not hear of the obſerving of a Goſpel-Life; becauſe of the Carnal ſoftneſs of their Minds and their ſenſual Pleaſures, to which they are ſo habituated, ſince their Defection, when they abandoned the Light of Truth, to embrace Errors invented by ſenſual Men. Thoſe Habits, I ſay, make them afraid to hear any thing ſpoken of an Evangelical Life; and they not only deſpiſe or reject it as a thing impoſſible to be obſerved; but moreover they ſeek to hinder any other from following, or ſtriving to follow it; ſince this would be a tacit Reproof to their Defection. They ſeek to kill me, becauſe God has given me his Light of Truth; which I neither can nor will hinder, ſeeing ſuch is his Holy Will, which ought not to depend upon thoſe learned Wits, who will be called Doctors, tho they have not as yet learned the firſt Letter of the Knowledge of themſelves; neither do they know for what End they were created by God, neither do they enquire about the eſſential and fundamental Truths of God. It ſuffices them to know how to get wherewithal to keep a good Table, and to procure the Eſteem of Men. Behold the two Pillars upon which their Eccleſiaſtick State, Vertues and Dignities are built now adays.

§. 94. Which would be more tolerable, if at leaſt they would permit others to do their Buſineſs according to the Will of God, and if thoſe Clergy-men would ſuffer me peaceably to declare in Writing the Truths which God communicates to me, without contradicting them. But they on the contrary thirſt after my Death, becauſe God hath choſen me for an Inſtrument, and ſent me into the World to declare his Truths to Men; not by ſtudied Sermons as thoſe Preachers do, but by Truths ſo ſolid, that the learned themſelves cannot reſiſt them; for they ſeek only by fraudulent Arts to deſtroy me if they could. As about a Twelve-month ago they ſtirred up the Judges of *Hamburgh* to take me up and impriſon me; which they endeavoured to do, having ſent four of their Town Sergeants to my Lodging about Noon, to carry me away as a Criminal, though I could never know for what other Reaſon they did it, but becauſe I am God's Handmaid, declaring his Truths to thoſe who deſire to know them. For I ſhun Honor from Men, and wherever I am, I live as much unknown and ſolitary as I can, and ſeek nothing in this World but to fulfil the Will of God.

§. 95. But thoſe *Clergy-men* will not ſuffer me to do this; but would have me rather to ſubject my ſelf to their Errors, and forſake the Divine Light. This I will never do, whatever they may deviſe againſt me; for I have undertaken, with the hazard of my Life, to maintain and ſtand by the Truth which God makes known to me, without regarding their Threatnings and Perſecutions. God who has hitherto kept me out of their Hands, will yet be my Safeguard. And if at laſt they deprive me of the Life of the Body, yet they ſhall never be able to take from me the Life of my Soul. Neither can they kill the Holy Spirit, as they killed the Body of Chriſt; and if they kill my Body, my Blood will Water the Plant of the *Goſpel-Spirit*, to make it ſpring up the better: as the Blood of Chriſt, of his Apoſtles and holy Martyrs made the Chriſtian Church to increaſe, which Chriſt had planted in the ground of this World. So that I am little concern'd whether I live or die. And it is all one to me, whether thoſe Men take away my Life or not; ſince to live and die in Chriſt, is the ſame thing.

§. 96. Hence I will not ceaſe, for fear of Death, to declare the Truths of God, ſeeing I was born for this End; neither will I forbear to fulfil the Will of God, becauſe of the Threatnings of Men. I muſt again and again declare it, in all ſort of Terms and Reaſonings, that every one may know it, and no Body may periſh thro' Ignorance. As you,

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my Friend, cannot periſh thro' Ignorance, ſince I have ſhewn you ſo clearly the State of your Soul, and with ſo many Circumſtances, that you cannot doubt of it. But if you maliciouſly reject theſe Warnings and Admonitions, you muſt anſwer for it; in the mean time you are ſtill free to embrace the Light of Truth, or to remain in your Errors, loving your Darkneſs more than the Light. But conſider well what this will tend to, and what will be your end if you abide in the Errors in which you have lived hitherto. You ſhall not be of the number of thoſe, who ſhall be enlightned to behold the Glory of Chriſt; but of thoſe who having lov'd their Darkneſs more than the Light, ſhall abide in eternal Darkneſs. I do not tell you theſe Things, my Friend, to compel you to change your Life, for I will compel no Man, and I am not ſent to reprove or correct, but to declare the Truths of God to thoſe who are willing to hear them. And if theſe Truths offend you, be not angry with me; for I am only God's Meſſenger, to declare his Will and purpoſes concerning Men. For he deſires to ſave them, having created them all for Salvation. Neither can he Will, that ſo much as one Periſh; and if Man will not comply with his Purpoſes, he Damns himſelf, and cannot lay the blame on others, far leſs on God, who truly damns no Man, but does good always to all Men. But when Man will needs Ruin and Damn himſelf, God cannot hinder him, becauſe he created Man altogether free: as I alſo leave you, my Friend, and all thoſe who ſhall read this preſent *Renovation of the Goſpel-Spirit*, written for thoſe only who deſire to become true Chriſtians. I ſhall hereafter ſhew the Way of doing this moſt particularly, diſcovering to every one the bottom of his Heart, by what Spirit he is guided; and what every one ought to do, that they may ſubdue their Corruption, and become the true People of God, and Brethren of Jeſus Chriſt, and may enter with him into his Glory.

§. 97. But becauſe this will be a large Treatiſe, I have reſolv'd to publiſh it in three Parts, for Peoples conveniency; finiſhing this firſt Part with this Letter, which entirely diſcovers the Miſeries and Miſchiefs that Sin has brought upon Man, becauſe this is chiefly neceſſary for the eſtabliſhing of a *Goſpel-Life*. For he who knows not his wretched State, cannot alter it; and will ſtill think that he is in the way of Salvation, when he is going on in that of Damnation. And being blinded with this corrupt Imagination he will be ſlack in reſolving to embrace a Goſpel-Life, which is altogether contrary to Fleſh and Blood.

§. 98.

§. 98. Hence thoſe new Doctors ſay, that *it is impoſſible to keep the Goſpel-Law*: tho' in truth it is moſt eaſie to him who has firmly reſolved to labour to work out his Salvation. All the difficulty is in the beginning, whilſt corrupt Nature is accuſtom'd to follow its brutal Inclinations, and therefore it muſt have a double Bit to make it turn to the Right-hand or the Left, according to the Will of God. It muſt be managed like a young Colt that is to be trained, who after he is once well tam'd with the Whip and Spur, does good Service to his Maſter, and carries him whither he will. Juſt ſo is corrupt Nature, which is the brutal part of Man, it is at firſt Stubborn, and refuſes to ſubject its Will to the Divine Will, and labors as much as it can to caſt off this Yoke, till Reaſon and the firm Reſolution of a Man conſtrain this brutal Part to yield to God by the Whip of often repeated Actions, contrary to its Inclinations; and by the Spur of enduring painful and hard things, whereby at laſt this rebellious and froward Nature may be reduc'd to its Duty; as we read that St. *Francis* ſaid to his Corruption: *Thou Aſs, if thou wilt not obey the Will of God, I'll make thee eat hard Straw.* Thus muſt this Corruption be threatned, when it will Rebel againſt a Goſpel Life; ſeeing this is good, and pleaſant even to Nature it ſelf, when once it is ſubjected to the Will of God: for then it brings Quiet and Contentment both to the Body and to the Soul.

§. 99. Wherefore Chriſt ſaid, (*Mat.* xi.) *Take my Yoke upon you, for it is eaſie, and my Burthen is Light.* Now this infallible Truth cannot lie; he ſpoke the Truth, when he ſaid that *his Yoke is eaſie*, as I my ſelf experience it. And I find that truly my Soul is more joyful and contented, ſince I reſiſted my corrupt Nature, and have ſubjected it to the Will of God, than formerly, when I flattered my Corruption, and let it follow its Inclinations; which gave me oftentimes various Griefs and Diſcontents, while I felt my Mind toſſed with various Paſſions, with divers Deſires, Luſts, Inconſtancy, Diſquiets and Diſpleaſures. But after that my corrupt Nature was ſubdued and overcome, it is become pliable and obedient; always in calm and tranquility, never deſiring what it has not, but ſatisfied with what it has.

§. 100. In ſhort this very nature, which before it was ſubdued roſe up againſt me, ſerves me now for a Foot-ſtool, for accompliſhing the Will of God: This ſhe aſſures you of, who ſtill remains,

Your very affectionate in Jeſus Chriſt,
ANTHOINETTE BOURIGNON.

The End of the First Part.

TO THE READER.

I *Suſpect*, Friendly Reader, *you may be apt to Wonder, that whilſt I'm treating of the* RENOVATION OF THE GOSPEL-SPIRIT, I *ſhould inſiſt ſo much on the Corruption which Sin hath brought into the Humane Nature, and alſo on the noble and glorious State in which Man was created. But the Reaſon for which I do it is very material,* viz. *that you may have the ſtronger Motives for embracing an Evangelical Life. What would it ſignifie to ſhew you the Means of a* Goſpel-Life, *before you had firmly reſolv'd to Practiſe it? For if the Fear of Hell, or the Joys of Paradiſe, do not prevail upon you to embrace this Life, Nature will never do it: Seeing the Goſpel-Law is entirely repugnant to the Law of corrupt Nature; which knows it cannot outlive this mortal Life, and therefore is for taking its Pleaſure and Satisfaction here as much as it can, having nothing elſe to expect for the time to come, becauſe Death puts an end to it. Therefore be ſure never to conſult with this corrupt Nature, when you have a Mind to do good, and to purſue or love Eternal Things. 'Tis only the Spirit and Soul of Man which can value theſe Things, and deny it ſelf in order to practiſe a* Goſpel-Life: *Corruption will never have any ſhare in 'em. For this Reaſon I was willing to ſay ſomething of the Joys and Glories of Heaven, that I might excite your Deſires to love and ſeek after them; to the end you may couragiouſly ſurmount all the Difficulties which may happen to you in ſearching after the Goſpel-pearl of great Price: for methinks there's no more pow-*

erful

erful Motive to reach and affect Man's Heart, than the Hope and Conſideration of Eternal Felicity. Indeed the fear of Helliſh Torments may be able alſo to ſoften ſome hard Hearts. But it matters little by what means one is brought to the Love of eternal Things, whether by Fear or Hope; provided he truly arrive at this Love, and conſequently at the Hatred of himſelf: for the one cannot be without the other. If you love your ſelf and this preſent Life, you can't love God and Eternity. Remember this ſhort Leſſon; and when once I find any firmly reſolved to deny themſelves, and lead a Goſpel-Life; I will further ſhew them, in the Third Part *of this Treatiſe, the true Method of doing ſo, in order to become Children of God, and Heirs of Heaven. In the mean time accept of this* Second Part; *which, if you Read it with Attention, I'm hopeful will be uſeful and ſalutary to you. This ſhe aſſures you of, who remains,*

Friendly Reader,

Yours Affectionately in Jeſus Chriſt,

ANTHOINETTE BOURIGNON.

THE

THE RENOVATION OF The GOSPEL-SPIRIT.

The Second Part.

LETTER I.

One that would follow Jeſus Chriſt in Time and Eternity, muſt embrace Lowlineſs and Humility of Heart, taking that which is leaſt in every thing; a Sinner being unworthy even of that, and cannot deſire any other but through Pride, which the Devil and the Sin of Adam *planted in our Souls, and which Jeſus Chriſt would have rooted out of them.*

My Children,

§. 1. I Wiſh unto you all, for your New-Year's-Gift, the *Lowlineſs* of *Jeſus Chriſt*. I pray God to imprint it upon your Hearts, that you may be able to imitate and follow your Savior in this World, in order to your following him afterwards in Eternity: For according as you ſhall be poor in Spirit, and humble of Heart here, accordingly ſhall you be admitted near to Chriſt in the Life Eternal. And as Nature is always more enclin'd to draw near the Object that it loves, than to withdraw from it, ſo muſt you always endeavor to imitate the *Lowlineſs* of *Chriſt* as near as poſſibly you can, if he be the Object of your Love.

§. 2. True

§. 2. Trūe it is, God gives you great Lights for diſcovering his Divine Secrets, but this could not ſave you, if with this Knowledge you do not imitate *Chriſt* in his *Lowlineſs* and *Humility of Heart*: For the Angels were well vers'd in the high Myſteries of God, and yet, with all their Knowledge, are become Devils, for not imitating the *Lowlineſs* and *Humility of Jeſus Chriſt*. So in like manner ſhall all Men periſh, who do not embrace and practiſe this *Lowlineſs and Humility of Heart*, this being the great Point in which all true Vertue doth conſiſt.

§. 3. This is a thing that few have well conſidered, ſeeing in our Days all labor to have that which is fineſt and beſt. This ſhews what Opinion Men have of themſelves, when they think they merit thoſe valuable Things, when in effect they deſerve not the leaſt things that God has given them. This comes of want of Knowledge; for did they truly know that Vertue conſiſts in taking and chuſing that which is leaſt always, and in all things, there's no doubt but ſuch as had a mind to become vertuous would exerciſe themſelves in this Practice, how averſe ſoever their Nature might be to it; ſince Jeſus Chriſt has told us, (a) *That we muſt deny our ſelves, that we may be his Diſciples.*

§. 4. We muſt not follow the Inclinations of our Nature, which is ſo entirely corrupted by Sin, as nothing can proceed from it but Evil and Sin. This ought indeed to humble Man, to find himſelf ſo wicked and miſerable, when yet we ſee he continues to be proud and ſelf-conceited. This is contrary to good Sence, and is what a good Judgment could not be capable of, but by the Devil's Procurement, who caſts a Cloud over their Underſtandings, that they may not ſee their Corruptions, by imprinting deeply upon their Hearts a good Opinion of themſelves, that all their Words and Actions may be regulated according to this Self-eſteem.

§. 5. *My Children*, The Reaſon why you cannot fully reſolve upon taking always the leaſt of every thing, and chuſing the laſt Place, as Jeſus Chriſt adviſes, is becauſe your Nature does yet place a greater Value upon the fineſt and the beſt, than upon the leaſt things: Which is a Blindneſs that the Devil has caſt upon your Spirits; the leaſt things being in effect the moſt valuable, in as much as Jeſus Chriſt himſelf was pleas'd to chuſe them. He who had † a Right to all, and was worthy of the fineſt and beſt of every thing, who nevertheleſs, we are well aſſured, did chuſe for his own

(a) *Matth.* xvi. 24. † *Phil.* ii. 4, 6, 7, 8.

Uſe

Uſe the things that were moſt ſlighted and deſpiſed. And we, if we will be his Diſciples, muſt (*b*) do the ſame thing with Joy and Satisfaction; for God has no Pleaſure in a (*c*) conſtrain'd uneaſie Obedience.

§. 6. God created all things beautiful and good for Man, which he might have enjoy'd at Pleaſure, had he continued in the LOVE of his God; but ſince he departed from this *Love*, he has made himſelf unworthy of the leaſt of the things that God created for him, having made himſelf an Enemy to the Creator of all theſe things, and therefore ought to look upon himſelf as not worthy to enjoy the leaſt of them, becauſe of his Ingratitude and Sin; and has reaſon to ſay unto God in the Language of the prodigal Son, (*d*) *Father, I am not worthy to be called thy Son*, nor to eat of the Food which thou haſt created, nor to enjoy any of the good things of this Life; inſtead of imagining that he has not that which is fine and good enough, anſwerable to his Merit. This proceeds only from a proud Heart, which Man muſt oppoſe with all his Might, God having ſaid, (*e*) that *He reſiſteth the Proud, and giveth his Heart unto the Humble.*

§. 7. If then you, *my Children*, would all have the Heart of God, your only way is to imitate the *Lowlineſs* and *Humility* of Chriſt, and to chuſe always the leaſt valuable things for your own Uſe, even when it is in your Power to have the beſt: For when you take the beſt things, you behave your ſelves as if you were not fallen into Sin, and as if ye were ſtill in the Love of God, although you be fallen from it; and being become his Enemies, you ought to look upon your ſelves as not worthy to eat a Bit of Bread, an Enemy having no Right to any Favor from his Adverſary.

§. 8. Why do you, *my Children*, feel any Pain or Repugnancy in chuſing the leaſt, or the loweſt Place, when you know it was your Maſter *Chriſt*'s Practice to do ſo, and that herein I am ſtriving to be like him? Although I don't do this ſo perfectly as I might, if I had no Conſideration of your Infirmity, which would not be able to keep me Company, if I ſhould chuſe the leaſt in every thing, as exactly as I would do, if I were alone by my ſelf: For I accommodate my ſelf to your Weakneſs, as it would ſeem God does alſo, ſeeing he allows us all our Neceſſaries, even in great abundance.

(b) *John* xiii. 14, 15. (c) *Pſal.* cx. 3. (d) *Luke* xv. 19. (e) 1 *Pet.* v. 5.

§. 9 That

§. 9. That which troubles me, is to ſee ſome of you ſometimes murmuring, and not content with what I do according to the Will of God. This cannot come of Humility. For the humble Heart thinketh always, that it hath more than it merits of every thing, and never deſires more but ſimple Neceſſaries, judging it ſelf unworthy even of theſe. But when we feel a Diſpleaſure for not having all things according to our Wiſh, this is a Sign that the Heart is ſtill proud, and thinks it merits more than it has.

§. 10. This *Pride of Life* lurks in the innermoſt Ground of the Soul of all Men that are ſprung from *Adam*: For they bring this with them into the World, becauſe of the Sin of their firſt common Parent. They have contracted an Eſteem of themſelves from the Miſchievouſneſs of his Sin, which he committed in all Men, when he ceas'd to give unto God the Glory of his own Being, and of all the Perfections wherewith God was pleas'd to create him, that he might aſcribe them to himſelf, as if he had been Lord of them, and capable to have received them, tho' he was made out of nothing, and incapable of any thing And this wretched Self-eſteem that *Adam* had, was then imprinted in the Hearts of all Men that were in his Loins: Therefore do we ſee this born with them, whatever their Rank and Condition may be, they are enclin'd to have an Opinion of themſelves; all deſiring to command rather than to obey, preferring their own Opinions to thoſe of their Fellows, maintaining and ſupporting their own Imaginations with all their Force, without being willing to give place to thoſe of others; deſiring Preferment, and to have the fineſt and beſt of every thing for their own Uſe. All which Qualities are in all Men that live after the Dictates of Nature, as they are likewiſe in Beaſts, who always chuſe the beſt when they can have it.

§. 11. For this Reaſon Jeſus Chriſt comes to teach all that would be his Diſciples to *deny themſelves*, (f) *and to chuſe always the leaſt and the loweſt Place*. This he has taught them in Word and Deed, to the end that laying aſide all this Self-eſteem, they might attribute unto God all that is beautiful and good, together with the Glory of all the Good that they can do or ſay, that ſo mortifying in themſelves that curſed Self-eſteem wherewith the Sin of *Adam* did infect them, they may riſe again new Creatures in the Second *Adam*, which is Jeſus Chriſt; whom you, *my Children*, ought to

(f) *Luke* xiv. 10.

hear

hear and obey, making no Account of your ſelves if you would be happy in this World and in Eternity.

§. 12. For if you were diveſted of this Self-eſteem, we ſhould afterwards have but one Heart and one Will in God, which would be a Paradiſe upon Earth; and you ſhall have the Aſſurance of Eternal Life given unto you, if ye receive the Inſtructions that God gives me, as Children, without Gainſaying and Reſiſtance. This I hope you'll begin to do with this New-Year, which I wiſh may be good and ſalutary to you all, and continue

Your Mother in Jeſus Chriſt,

Jan. 3. 1676.

A. Bourignon.

Phil. ii. 5, &c.

[*Let the ſame Mind and Diſpoſition be in you that was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus, who being in the Form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God; but made himſelf of no Reputation, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeneſs of Men; and being found in Faſhion as a Man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs.*

LETTER II.

[*This Letter is wholly Divine and Incomparable for enlightning and convincing Mens Hearts as to the Neceſſity of denying our ſelves, and ſubmitting our ſelves to the Will of God, that we may come to live again to his Holy Spirit, in which the Being and Perfection of a Chriſtian doth conſiſt. The Means of doing this, and Reaſons to perſwade us to it, taken ſometimes from our own Corruption, ſometimes from the Conſequence of Sin, from the Glory and End of our Creation, from the Love of God, from preſent and future Rewards and Puniſhments, from the Imitation of Jeſus Chriſt and the Saints, from the Promiſes of God, and other Motives, are in this Letter here and there ſet forth in ſo natural and ſo powerful a Light, as they that have a mind to be the Children of God, muſt from thence be convinced in their Conſciences, that God offers them*

here by this Perſon, the Means of being born again unto Jeſus Chriſt, and renewed in the Spirit of his holy Goſpel; and the Milk of that Underſtanding that is without Deceit, to nouriſh them therein, and to make them grow.]

My Children,

§. 1. THere's yet one thing that ſtands in the Way of our being united in the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, however deſirous ye may be of it, the Effect does not anſwer your Wiſhes. For oft-times our Deſires are divided, our Words are contradictory, and our Works run counter to one another: Yea, even thoſe things which I ſpeak unto you from God are queſtion'd or cenſur'd, and ſometimes hardly comply'd with by ſome of you.

§. 2. Which nevertheleſs ye ought all joyfully to obſerve, there being nothing more pleaſant than to do God's Will, as nothing contributes more to our Quiet, than Obedience and Submiſſion to another, nothing more pleaſant and agreeable than Harmony of Deſires among Perſons that live together in a Community, nothing conduces more to our Peace than yielding one to the other without Contradiction; and nothing creates a mutual Love more than the having all the ſame Scope and Aim, helping and aſſiſting one another, and reckoning our ſelves happy in doing any thing that promotes the Good of the Community.

§. 3. Whence comes it then, my Children, that ye don't feel a Pleaſure in doing all theſe things, ſeeing ye deſire it, and came out of your own Country with me, that ye might follow the Spirit of God, which guides me, as ye your ſelves are perſwaded in your own Conſciences; ſeeing ye had no other Ground to follow me, but your Belief that I was under the Conduct of the Holy Spirit? In which ye are not deceived, ſeeing he does in truth govern me in all my Ways, as ye your ſelves have had Experience, and therefore promiſed to obey me in whatever I ſhould enjoin you from God; which is a good and wholſome Promiſe, For in Heaven and Earth there's nothing better than Obedience to the Will of God, which Will I am frequently acquainted with, and do many times declare it unto you, when ye neither fear nor obey it; yea, hardly receive or believe it ſo far as to have that Eſteem for it that is fitting.

§. 4. This makes me often ſigh, contrary to my Temper, which is to be always joyful and contented. And ye have all of you, for the Reaſons already mention'd, given me many Occaſions to abandon you, by withdrawing my ſelf

out

out of your Company: For what Satisfaction is there to be found in the Company of Persons, that do almost in every thing contradict one another? Seeing I have seen the Time that I could not open my Mouth to speak one Word, but presently I might hear one or other of you contradicting; and whatsoever I did in Obedience to God was found fault with by you, who would be teaching me to do better than what God himself enjoin'd me. This was far from that Obedience that ye promis'd me. But ye have dealt with the Spirit of God as with your Equal. Yea, ye have been willing to have your natural Spirit, tho' corrupted, thought wiser, and more perfect than the Spirit of God, and have induc'd one another sometimes to do this, and to argue against me, that ye might get me to follow your Sentiments, instead of those of the Holy Spirit, which I was perswaded I felt moving me to do things contrary to your Opinions and Judgment.

§. 5. So as if God had not given me Strength to resist you all, I should certainly have forsaken God's Will to comply with your's, that I might live in Peace. For there was only my self alone to oppose you all, who are yet living according to the Motions of your corrupt Nature, which ye would have been glad to see me do also, though I could not do it; and at the same time continue faithful to God: wherefore I resisted you all, and chose rather to give up your Friendship than to do or say any thing contrary to what God taught me.

§. 6. And my Constancy in this has brought me the Victory; for I have obtain'd of God Permission to forsake you all, in case you are unwilling to submit your selves to the Conduct of the Holy Spirit. And in order to this I have sought Occasions to set you all in convenient Places, where ye might follow the Inclinations of your Nature at Pleasure in my Absence; placing *N*... in a separate House, and *N*,... in *Holland*, *N*... should have bought the House at *Lollevout* to dwell in it with *N.* and *N.* and I would have shut my self up all alone in a Room by my self, to see no Person, except it had been my Children, sometimes when they had wanted Advice and Counsel.

§. 7. I am well satisfied that from this Separation I should have reap'd great Quiet and Comfort for my Soul, but I knew by Experience, that this would have been both a Temporal and Eternal Disadvantage to my Children. Which made me resolve to make a Trial of them yet for some time longer, to see if at last they will give up themselves unto God's Government, forsaking that of their corrupt Nature, which

can't but bring them to an ill End. And this Houſe in which we reſide at preſent ſhall be the laſt Experiment I ſhall make of this, ſeeing *the Time draweth near, when God will make the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt to revive in the Souls of many.*

§. 8. My Children make your Souls ſo happy, as they may be in a Readineſs for the Lord, whenſoever he ſhall come. And you muſt not think, that the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt will dwell in any Perſon, who continues willing to comply with the Motions of his corrupt Nature, ſeeing that pure and holy Spirit (*a*) cannot dwell in a Soul that is defiled with its own Self-will. This I know from my own Experience. For from my Infancy I had Communion with God, and it was my Delight to entertain my Spirit with him, not minding childiſh Pleaſures; but when coming to be of Age, I began to follow the Motions of my Nature, and to divert my ſelf in the Company of my Companions, taking Pleaſure in Eating and Drinking according to my Appetites, in walking and recreating my ſelf, in wearing fine Apparel, and being careſs'd and valued and eſteem'd, then God withdrew out of my Soul, and I was as it were forſaken and abandon'd; by having nothing left in me but a vain Wiſdom, and an empty Pleaſure, both which often ended in Diſpleaſure and Sadneſs. This gave me to underſtand, that God will not dwell in a Soul that follows the Motions of corrupt Nature: For though God of his infinite Goodneſs did after this ſometimes grant me inward Conſolations, yet were they but momentary, as if he did only tranſiently paſs through my Soul, and were unwilling to ſtop in it; and his Lights entred into my Soul like Flaſhes of Lightning, which paſs ſwiftly by, and are ſuddenly forgotten.

§ 9. This may inſtruct you, my Children, that you may become wiſe from what was my Loſs. Remember this Leſſon well, that *ye will never be true Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, if ye follow the Motions of your corrupt Nature*, which is become God's Enemy, and can do nothing but what is Evil (*b*). Therefore ye muſt renounce this, if ye would obtain the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, which cannot live nor dwell in you, until ye have ſubdued the Corruption of your Nature. For according as ye ſhall reſiſt your own Wills, accordingly ſhall ye follow God's Will and no more: Seeing theſe two Wills being Contraries, can never ſubſiſt together in the ſame Soul, but like two Oppoſites, one will always drive out the other; they can no

(a) *Wiſd.* i. 4, 5. (b) *Rom.* viii. 7, 8.

more

more dwell together, than Fire can burn in the midſt of Water.

§. 10. And this Truth being imprinted upon your Souls, no doubt ye ſhall receive the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt. For if ye are abſolutely reſolved to be renewed in this Spirit, ye will declare War againſt your own Inclinations, by refuſing your own Will every thing that it deſires, and will no more ſeek after any thing that Nature loves, and will take it for your Work and Exerciſe to deny your own Will every thing that it deſireth, not giving way to it in the leaſt Inſtance, neither in Eating, nor Drinking, nor Cloathing, nor Lying, nor in Words or Actions, how little and inconſiderable ſoever they may be.

§. 11. For there are no Sins little before God; thoſe that we judge leaſt, do diſpleaſe God, and baniſh him out of our Souls; yea, they drive him thence, though he were dwelling there; and the Moment we follow our own Wills in any thing, God is forced ſpeedily to depart from us, becauſe he cannot dwell with Sin, which is incompatible with him.

§. 12. It is now a long time, my Children, that I have been endeavouring to imprint this Truth upon your Souls; but ye, believing that there is no ſuch great Evil in following your own Wills, and the Motions of your corrupt Natures, have never cordially receiv'd it. This is the Reaſon that you have not been able to make any Progreſs in true Vertue, though ye have dwelt many Years with me: Nor will ye ever in time coming attain to it, if ye take not this for your Exerciſe or Practice, namely, to reſiſt your natural Motions, by denying to your own Wills whatever it be that they deſire.

§. 13. For your Souls cannot be repleniſh'd with the Spirit of Chriſt, if they are not firſt emptied of your own Spirits, which *Adam* has corrupted by his Sin; and ſince that Sin Men are left ſo ignorant and weak, that they cannot now do any Good, though they deſire it. This is the Curſe that Sin has brought upon Man's Spirit, in which Man lives until he be born again in the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt. For every kind of Sin and Curſe is the Product (*b*) of the firſt Sin of our old Father *Adam*. And theſe Sins are natural to all his Poſterity, unleſs they, when they are come to the Uſe of Reaſon, and have diſcover'd the miſerable Plight into which Sin has reduced them, do, of their own proper and free Will, ſet themſelves againſt the perverſe Inclination which they in-

(b) 1 *Eſdr.* iii. 30, 31.

herit from *Adam*, and croſs it. Then may we refuſe Evil, and do Good, if we ſet our ſelves againſt this natural Spirit, from which all Evil flows; that we may hear and obey Jeſus Chriſt's Spirit, from which all Good is derived. It is true, no Perſon ſhall ever be conſtrain'd to do this, ſeeing God has created all Men free; and Chriſt, ſpeaking to Men, ſays no more but this, (c) *If ye will be perfect, ſell what ye have: take up your Croſs and follow me.*

§. 14. I make no doubt, my Children, but ye are willing to be perfect, having left the World, that ye may follow Jeſus Chriſt. But, for ought I ſee, ye have not ſufficiently underſtood, that ye muſt wholly renounce your own Self-wills, in order to receive the Spirit of Chriſt: For ye look for this before ye have denied your ſelves, or taken up Sufferings and Croſſes, that ye might follow him, as if ye were willing to follow him only unto *Tabor*, where he makes his Glory to appear; and not to Mount *Calvary* alſo, where he is to ſuffer and die. This is a great Deluſion; for no Perſon ſhall be with him in his Glory, but ſuch as have firſt follow'd him in Reproaches, in Shame and Contempt, and in the Death of their natural Motions. Therefore, my Children, there remains no other thing for you to learn, in order to have Jeſus Chriſt's Spirit raiſed up in your Souls, but only the Mortification of the Motions of this corrupt Nature. Ye need not go to the Academies or Univerſities of the Learned to find the Spirit of Chriſt; ye muſt only deny your ſelves, and not follow the Motions of your Corruption; if ye do this, God will pour the Spirit of his Son into your Souls, and will fill you with his Wiſdom and his Vertue: As he would alſo do the Souls of all other Men, were it not for this, that they love their own Self-wills more than the Will of God, which obſtructs the Operations of his Grace, and is the Reaſon that he cannot communicate himſelf unto them, nor make his Will known to them, ſeeing they are not diſpos'd to obey it; ſo long as they live in their own Self-loves, it is impoſſible for them to ſubmit themſelves to God's Will, which is repugnant to their Self-wills.

§. 15. For every thing that God commands is contrary to the Inclinations of corrupt Nature. He ſays, *That we muſt love God with all our Heart*; a Thing that Nature cannot do, which loves only what it ſees or feels, not being affected with any other thing. God forbids *to take his Name in vain*; and Nature would have a Liberty of ſaying and ſwearing what it pleaſes. God commands to *ſanctifie his Sabbaths*; and Na-

(c) *Math.* xix. 21.

ture

ture would then be taking its Pleaſure and Paſtime. God commands us to *honor our Father and Mother*; Nature deſpiſes them; and longs to be deliver'd from their Obedience. God forbids to *kill*; and Nature would always be revenged of its Enemies. God forbids to *commit Fornication*; and Nature is prone to it. God ſays, *Thou ſhalt not ſteal*; Nature always covets inſatiably, and would ſteal and rob what it covets, if this were not blameable before Men. God forbids *to bear falſe Witneſs*; Nature is always enclin'd to lye, that it may juſtifie or excuſe its own Faults. God ſays, *Thou ſhalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife, nor ought that belongs to another*; and Nature always deſires whatſoever is agreeable that it hath not, without conſidering whether it belongs to another. Finally, Nature is directly contrary to God's Will in every thing, ſo as it is not to be comply'd with in any thing by him that deſires the Perfection of his Soul; becauſe being quite corrupted, it cannot will or chuſe any Good.

§. 16. For this Reaſon, my Children, ye ought to ſuſpect it in all Things; and not to follow your natural Inclinations, even in good Things, ſince they are deceitful, and warp all about to ſome ill End. Give up your ſelves rather to be govern'd by the Will of God, which, being holy, will ſanctifie you, and conduct you to the Haven of Salvation: Whereas your own Self-will would infallibly lead you to Hell, ſeeing it is (*d*) damned from its Birth, and can never ſave any Perſon, do what it will; becauſe all that proceeds from it is corrupt and evil, directly contrary to God's Will and the Spirit of Chriſt Jeſus.

§. 17. Which things ye, my Children, may have ſufficiently remark'd in your ſelves; for though ye know, that the Spirit of Chriſt is humble, yet is your Nature unwilling to be humble; it rebelleth upon the leaſt Correction, and is unwilling to own a Fault ſo long as it has it in its Power to excuſe it. Nature alſo is in all things contrary to the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, and directly oppoſes it ſelf to all his Evangelical Counſels. For although (*e*) *Poverty of Spirit* be an Evangelical Counſel, yet is Nature unwilling ever to be poor; and though the Perſon were poor in effect, yet is Nature always rich in Deſires, and ſeeketh abundance, to the utmoſt of its Power, not willingly ſatisfying it ſelf with Neceſſaries, when it can have more. Jeſus Chriſt adviſes to (*f*) *perpetual Chaſtity*, but Nature refuſes to be reſtrain'd, and chuſes rather to enjoy the Pleaſures of the Fleſh, of the Body and Mind at

(d) *Epheſ.* ii. 3. (e) *Matth.* v. 3. xix. 21. (f) *Matth.* v. 8. xix. 12.

its Wiſh, when it is in its Power. Jeſus Chriſt counſels an (g) *entire Obedience*, and Nature would have all ſort of Liberty, without being obliged to ſubmit or obey, thinking its own Will preferable to the beſt Counſels that are given it. So that this Nature is continually rebelling againſt all that is good and wholſome, and is unwilling to follow Chriſt in any thing.

§. 18. If one lays not a Conſtraint upon his own Nature, he ſhall never be ſaved, but will periſh in the Corruption wherein he was born; he ſhall live and die in the Darkneſs of Death, and dwell in it eternally, if he is not during this Life renew'd in the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, embracing his *Humility* and his *Lowlineſs*, which contradict that *Pride* and *Haughtineſs* which *Adam*'s Sin has imprinted on the Souls of all that are deſcended of him ſince the Fall; chuſing alſo the *Poverty* of Chriſt, which is contrary to the Deſire of *Covetouſneſs*, which the ſame Sin has planted in the Hearts of all Men; and above all things exerciſing himſelf in his *Charity*, which contradicts *the Love and Eſteem of our ſelves*, which is natural to all Men in general. So that it is impoſſible, that ever ſo much as one Perſon can be ſaved, if he does not in this World effectually renounce the Will and Motions of his corrupt Nature; becauſe this brings forth nothing but Sins, which damn Men, and are directly oppoſite to all that is good and wholſome.

§. 19. And therefore we muſt manfully reſiſt it, if we would become Chriſtians, that is, regenerated Perſons; which none are, but only thoſe that have truly gotten the Victory over their corrupt Nature: For we deceive and impoſe upon our ſelves, if we ſay or believe that we are regenerate Perſons, when we know and feel by Experience, that we do yet love the Eaſe and Pleaſures of this Life, or that we eſteem Honor and human Applauſe, or Poſſeſſions, or Riches; that we are willing to be ſerv'd, follow'd, or approv'd in our Opinions, or applauded in our Undertakings; ſeeing all theſe things are of this World, and proceed from corrupt Nature, which is dead to Grace: For when one is regenerated, he ſeeks no more after Things here below, but (h) *thoſe that are above, and not thoſe that are upon the Earth*, as the Apoſtle gives it alſo for a Chriſtian Truth. This is a certain Mark to know if one is regenerated or not. For as long as one ſeeketh ſtill the Things that are of the Earth, he is not living in the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo cannot be a regenerated Perſon;

(g) *Matth.* xvi. 24. xx. 26, 27. (h) *Coloſſ.* iii. 1.

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becauſe true Regeneration conſiſteth in this, that one live in the Spirit of Chriſt, and in the Mortification of corrupt Nature. And as we cannot ſay, that one is raiſed again before he was dead, ſo neither can we truly ſay, that a Soul is reviv'd before it is entirely dead to the Corruption of its Nature.

§. 20. I am not ignorant, that Men call many things by this Name, of being *born again* in the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt. For ſome think they are thus born again, when they have only the Deſire to be ſo: Others think they are regenerate, when they refrain from groſs Sins, ſuch as are blameable before Men: Others again when they know, and can diſcourſe well in Myſtical Matters. But all theſe Diſcourſes, and all theſe Regenerations are but Fable and Amuſement of Spirit, which deceive him that poſſeſſeth them, believing the falſe to be true.

§. 21. For as it is written, (i) *If ye are the Children of* Abraham, *do the Works of* Abraham; ſo muſt it be ſaid to all Men, *If ye are Chriſtians, do the Works of Chriſt.* For as it well becometh the Son to learn his Father's Trade, ſo is it very becoming for Chriſtians to learn what their Father Jeſus Chriſt hath done, otherwiſe they are not worthy to be called his Children. Jeſus Chriſt was humble in Heart, poor in Spirit, meek, charitable and obedient, even to the Death of the Croſs; and the Men of this Age are in high Eſteem of themſelves, proud-hearted, rich in Deſire, arrogant, have their Heart harden'd towards their Neighbour and Divine Things; are obſtinate and unwilling to ſubmit: and with all this ſay or believe, that they are born again in the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, becauſe they know not what this Regeneration is; that it conſiſteth in the Conforming our Lives to the Life and Doctrine of Chriſt, and following him as our true Father, who has reſtored Life unto our Souls, as *Adam* at firſt gave Life to our Bodies, but Death to our Souls.

§. 22. He may truly be call'd our firſt Father, as Jeſus Chriſt may be called the Second *Adam*, and Father of all faithful Believers: So that as we are true Children of *Adam*, we are obliged to undergo the Sentence, which God enjoin'd him for his Sin, which all have committed in him, as they are alſo pardon'd in him, yet under Obligation of accompliſhing the Penitence that God enjoin'd him; without the Accompliſhment whereof no Perſon can be ſaved, becauſe his Pardon is conditional, and annex'd unto this Penitence, from which none

(i) *John* viii. 39.

can

tan be exempted. All that would be eternally happy with him, muſt follow this Father in his Penitence. Wherefore he is a Fool, whoever he be, that would take his Pleaſure and Diverſion here, in the ſame Place and Time where *Adam* ſuffer'd and mourn'd during his whole Life, without Interruption. And this Penitence is neceſſary for all, both Good and Bad. For all Men in general are ſubject to the External Penitence, which Sin hath occaſion'd in all the Creatures. They muſt endure the Smoak and Burning of the Fire, the Tempeſts and Chilneſs of the Air, the Violence and Drowning of the Water, the Dirt and Pollutions of the Earth, with many other kinds of Evils, which Sin has introduced into Nature, and which no Perſon can poſſibly avoid. But all muſt, during this miſerable Life, be ſubject to Cold and Heat, to the Intemperances of the Air, and other Elements, which bring Diſeaſes and Death upon Man; and nothing of all this can be avoided by any Perſon without Exception: Seeing all have ſinn'd in *Adam*, all are obliged to the Penitence which Sin has brought upon whole Nature; ſeeing before this Sin there were no Evils in Nature, God having created all (*l*) good, perfect and compleat, without any Intemperance and Diſorder. And ſeeing Man alone has been the Cauſe of all thoſe Evils, it is moſt juſt that he bear the Smart of them, as being the Work of his own Hands.

§. 23. And if Man is not willing chearfully to bear the exterior Evils, which himſelf has been the Cauſe of, he ſhall, together with them, bear interior Evils alſo to all Eternity, thoſe of the Soul and Spirit, which ſhall never have an End. For if Man does not willingly embrace the neceſſary Penitence that he finds in a voluntary Renunciation of the Inclinations of his own corrupt Nature, he muſt periſh eternally, ſeeing this Corruption will lead him to Damnation, without the Neceſſity of any other Devil to tempt him; for this will as infallibly procure him Eternal Death, as it has already done the Temporal.

§. 24. Wherefore, my Children, ye ought to conſider well before ye reſolve, that ye may know if ye are willing to (*m*) war with this Corruption, that ye may be ſaved; or comply with it, that ye may be damned; it being abſolutely neceſſary to do the one or the other, ſeeing there is no Middle-way between thoſe. For the following our Corruption is the Way to Hell, as the Renouncing of it leads ſtraight to Paradiſe: For no Perſon has everhitherto been, or ſhall ever hereafter be

(l) *Wiſd.* i. 14. (m) *Rom.* viii. 13.

ſaved

ſaved by following the Will of his corrupt Nature; as no Perſon can be damned in reſiſting this Corruption, out of which all ſorts of Evil are form'd.

§. 25. Ye ſhall not need to ſtudy much, if ye do but well retain only theſe Two following Points, *viz. That we need do no more but deny our ſelves to be ſaved, and indulge our ſelves to be damned.* This is the Abridgment of the whole Chriſtian Doctrine, in which all the Good and Evil in the World is contain'd. For before Sin had corrupted Nature, there was not any Evil in it, God having created every thing good, without any Mixture of Evil.

§. 26. Which thing being ſuppos'd, as it is indeed true, what Difficulty can one find in reſolving to make War upon his own Corruption, and to reſiſt it in every thing? Muſt not he be his own Enemy, that would indulge and gratifie his own Will to the Prejudice of his Eternal Salvation? Seeing this Self-will is the Cauſe of many Temporal Evils to one, even in the time he is complying with it, and of much Regret and Diſpleaſure after he has obey'd it; as it did by our Father *Adam*, when he ſaw the Miſeries in which he had involv'd himſelf for having follow'd his Self-will, by placing his Affections upon the tranſient Things of this World. For his whole After-Life was nothing but a continual Mourning; and it is to be believ'd he never ſmiled after the Time of his Sin, but did in Heavineſs, and Sorrow, and Pain, accompliſh the Penance that God had enjoin'd him for the Space of Nine Hundred Years that he remain'd in this mortal Life; that by this means he might be able to recover that bleſſed and glorious State, which he had loſt by following his own Will: For he had known himſelf before his Sin beautiful, perfect, agile, ſubtile and luminous, fill'd with Wiſdom, and having Dominion over all the Creatures which God had created for him; all which Graces and beautiful Qualities he had loſt for having follow'd his own Will, and ſaw himſelf ugly, and naked, and groſs, and ignorant, and ſubjected to all the Creatures over which he formerly had Dominion.

§. 27. And the Knowledge both of his glorious and wretched Eſtate made all thoſe Miſeries appear ſweet unto him, in the hopes of recovering his Glory and Happineſs, after he had once ſatisfied God's Juſtice by ſo ſevere a Penitence. As the Truth is, that God will reſtore Men to that glorious State wherein *Adam* was created, after they have firſt ſuffer'd in this World the Puniſhment which God intail'd upon Sin; and put off that Corruption wherewith this ſame Sin hath cloath'd them: then ſhall they be cloath'd with the *white Robe* of

of their firſt Innocence(n), and *follow the immaculate Lamb* whitherſoever he goeth.

§. 28. For thoſe Souls ſhall be *Virgins* which have not had Pleaſure in this Corruption, nor been polluted by it. Such Perſons ſhall be the Virgins which *ſhall ſing Songs that none other can Sing, always following the Lamb*, which is Jeſus Chriſt, who never defiled himſelf with the infamous Woman of this Corruption, but remain'd pure and immaculate; tho' he was join'd to it in his mortal Body, yet did he never know or follow it.

§. 29. 'Tis likewiſe probable that *Adam* never followed the inclination of his Corruption after his Sin, but that he abhor'd it, for the great Miſchief it did him, in depriving him of that communion with God, which he enjoy'd before his Fall. For he was well ſatisfied that it was his Self-love that made him loſe his Converſation with God, and that upon his ſetting his Affections on the Creatures, he had loſt the LOVE of his God: Wherefore he would not any more take any Pleaſure with them, but avoided them; and would neither reliſh nor regard them, but only ſo far as his Neceſſity oblig'd him to it. As Jeſus Chriſt, the *Second Adam*, likewiſe uſed none of the Creatures for his Pleaſure, ſo long as he liv'd in this mortal World. For this, 'tis ſaid, he never laugh'd: and tho' he was oblig'd to uſe the Creatures for his ſupport in this Life; yet did he uſe as little as poſſible for his Neceſſity, taking in all that which was leaſt for his own Uſe, that he might not pollute himſelf with the Love of any of the Creatures; but might always have his Affections entire for God his Father, without any Mixture or Diviſion. Which thing the Chriſtian ought alſo to do, if he would return to the glorious State wherein *Adam* was created, and dwell in it Eternally with his old Father *Adam*, and with his new Father, which is Jeſus Chriſt: whom he muſt follow in this World, taking the ſame Road that they walked in; otherwiſe he ſhall never arrive unto their bleſſed and eternal Society.

§. 30. I'm afraid, my Children, ye will ſay to me, that it is impoſſible to attain to the perfection of thoſe two Parents: which is a great Error; for in effect it is moſt eaſy for any Perſon that will give himſelf up to be conducted by God's Spirit. For there is no better thing in the World, than for one to renounce the Inclinations of corrupt Nature, even during this Life; ſeeing this corruption brings nothing but Miſeries both to our Bodies and Souls: Whereas the being

(n) *Rev.* vii. v. 9. *&* xiv. 3, 4.

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governed by God's Spirit, bringeth every good thing to the Body, and every conſolation to the Soul. For we are not to think that this Heavenly Father will ſuffer his Children to lack any neceſſary thing, or that he will lay any inſupportable Burthen upon them, ſeeing he is All good, and loves us tenderly.

§. 31. He has no deſign to deſtroy Nature, but deſires to perfect it, and to take away from it all thoſe things that may hurt and aggrieve it; ſuch as is exceſs in things that we want for our Uſe, as in Drinking, Eating, Apparel, Riches, Furniture, Houſes, and in all that which is not ſimply neceſſary to the ſupport of this Life: becauſe (*o*) the exceſs of all theſe things are burthenſome to one that labors for his Salvation, in as much as they produce nothing even in this Life but Cares, and Labors, and Uneaſineſs, that would be inſupportable, were it not that the corruption of Nature loves them. For Nature wants but very little for her Neceſſities; which God will infallibly provide for thoſe that ſeek and long after him: and ye ſhall never ſee a Righteous Perſon left in Neceſſity. For God's Promiſe is eſtabliſh'd, when he hath ſaid, *Seek* (*p*) *firſt the Kingdom of Heaven; and the other Things ſhall be given unto you.* How then can it be impoſſible to accompliſh things ſo good, and to yield up ourſelves to the conduct of our Heavenly Father, who requires no more of us, but that we refrain from Evil and do Good?

§ 32. It is a good thing to follow our firſt Father *Adam* in his Penitence, to labor and till the Ground; ſeeing God enjoin'd this to all Men in *Adam*; and ſuch Labor is alſo good for the Health of the Body, ſeeing Man by his Irregularity and Exceſs, contracts abundance of groſs Humors, which are eaſily carried off by the Exerciſe of bodily Labor. So that it is an eaſy matter for us to make ourſelves like our firſt Father *Adam* after his Sin, we having cauſe enough to Mourn for our Faults, as he did for his; having committed a far greater number, which do well deſerve ſo ſhort a Penitence as our Life is now, in reſpect of 900 Years that *Adam*'s Penitence laſted; during all which time he did nothing that was impoſſible to Humane Nature.

§. 33. Thus is there nothing impoſſible required of us in following and imitating this firſt Father *Adam*, no more than in obeying and imitating our ſecond Father, which is Jeſus Chriſt, in what he requires of us; ſeeing they are all things that are good and wholſome both for the Soul and Body; and

(o) *Pſal.* xvii. *v.* 14. (p) *Matth.* vi. 33.

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himſelf ſays (q), *My Yoke is eaſie, and my Burthen light.* How corrupt are Mens Imaginations now, who think it is impoſſible to imitate our ſecond Father Jeſus Chriſt! He teaches nothing that's Evil, but all things that are Good and Eaſy, even for the Body, which would be more Healthy and better diſpoſed in a ſober uſe of Neceſſaries only, as in Eating and Drinking, and the like; than when it hath exceeded in any of theſe. For if we follow Chriſt in *Poverty of Spirit*, we ſhall be delivered from the Cares, and Travail, and Anxieties which thoſe that are Rich in Spirit do continually Labor under, that they may compaſs what they aim at: And if we imitate Jeſus Chriſt in his *Humility*, we ſhall be delivered from the Care of getting Money, that we may be honour'd and ſerved; and from the Uneaſineſs that we feel when we have not reſpect and deference enough paid us by others: and if we imitate Jeſus Chriſt in his *Submiſſion* to his Father, we ſhall live in Contentment and Quiet, like Children without Care, carried in the Arms of their Father. This ſhould be very agreeable to any Perſon that ſeeks God, who cannot be more at reſt, than when he knows that in all his Ways he is under the Conduct of his Heavenly Father. Whence ye may ſee, my Children, that there's no impoſſibility in following our two Fathers *Adam and Jeſus Chriſt*, but much Temporal and Eternal Felicity; and therefore for your own good reſolve to do it. Submit yourſelves entirely to the Government of God's Spirit, and hearken not any longer to the Motions of your corrupt Nature. Seeing they are in every thing Evil, reſiſt them manfully, and ſubmit yourſelves to God's Will in things great and ſmall; and thus by this Means ſhall ye be both here and Eternally Happy.

§. 34. I am ſatisfied ye have a Will and Deſire to do this, which nevertheleſs ye put not in Execution upon Occaſions; often preferring your own Wills unto God's Will. This proceeds of your not having yet ſufficiently known the Will of God, nor ſurmounted your natural Inclinations. But ye have now a preſent Remedy for both theſe Evils. For to remedy your Ignorance, God has given me his Light of Truth that teacheth all Truth: which I do liberally impart unto you.

§. 35. And ye, my Children, have no Reaſon to complain that you know not the Will of God, ſeeing he declares it unto me Daily: and I communicate it alſo Daily likewiſe unto you, as much as ye ſtand in need of for your Perfection,

(q) *Matth.* xi. v. 30.

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which I love and desire as much as I do my own; and the only Affliction I have in this World, is to see that your Souls are not abandon'd to God's Will, as mine is; and I labor more to promote your Perfection, than I do to advance mine own: For all that I speak is only to let you know your Sins, and understand by what Means ye may come to eternal Life. Seeing it is not for my self that I need to speak, and still less to Write, or take Care of houshold Affairs, or things Temporal; in as much as God converses more with my Soul, during my Silence and Repose, than he does when I write, or am busied about temporal Things. Wherefore I should have no mind to employ my self in these things, were it not for the Perfection of your Souls, and to make you comprehend the Will of God by Practice. For all that I write is to make you understand God's Will in every thing; and all that I do, is that you may follow me, and do indirectly what God has directly taught and instructed me in: Because being all made up of Body and Soul, we have need to nourish both the one and the other, according to the Will of God; which corrupt Nature is set against, chusing always in all things rather to follow the Irregularities of its own Corruption, than the Law that God gives it to be well-govern'd by.

§. 36. And because God teaches me to do every thing well and in its Season; to be sober and regular; and that Nature has a mind to do every thing Ill, and in the time of her own Motions; therefore do we oftentimes discord in our Desires; the Motions of corrupt Nature being always immoderate, chusing rather abundance than Sobriety. The Opposition which is betwixt God's Will and that of corrupt Nature, has been the occasion of the frequent Differences that have been among us, both as to things Spiritual and Temporal. Because God has planted in my Soul a Justice which corrupt Nature is unwilling to follow, esteeming more a seeming Righteousness approved by Man's Judgment, than that which is real before God. And ye, my Children, have never hitherto comply'd with me in this; your Spirits have always contradicted what I did in Obedience to the Righteousness of God. Yea, ye have oftentimes thought your own proper Inclinations better than the Righteousness of God, which I would have had you to follow, and ye never did, but by constraint or with regret, using your Endeavours to induce me to follow your Inclinations rather than the Righteousness of God: which ye could not have done, but through Ignorance, or because ye were not then sufficiently convinc'd in your Consciences, that God had planted this divine Righteousness in me; mistaking the

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Phariſaical Righteouſneſs, for the Righteouſneſs which is of God.

§. 37. This is what has blinded you hitherto, and been the Cauſe that we are not yet united together in the *Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt*; to which notwithſtanding we muſt all at laſt come, if we will be true Chriſtians, and live Eternally with him in his Kingdom. There being but one only Will that is good, it muſt neceſſarily follow, that all that cometh from theſe divided Wills is Evil. Thus ſays the Proverb, *The divided Houſe ſhall be deſolate* (r): which is verified in our Society; where there ought to have been nothing but Joy and Contentment in God; there has often been, notwithſtanding, Grief and Diſcontent coming of the Diviſion of our Wills, when ye was unwilling to comply with mine, and I could not yield to yours, except I had lightly regarded the Will of God. And I believe God call'd our Brother----- out of the World, becauſe he could not be brought to ſubmit his own Will unto God's; and the Habit he had contracted of following his own Will, had made him unworthy to ſee this Union of his Brethren in the *Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt*. Beware, my Children, that your Condition prove not the ſame with his, and endeavour to make your ſelves worthy of *God*, who *hath abſolutely reſolved to re-eſtabliſh his Church upon the Earth, and to reſtore the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt in it.*

§. 38. And ye have it in your choice, my Children, whether ye will Labor to recover this *Spirit*, which will deſcend upon all thoſe that will renounce the Inclinations of their corrupt Nature, and upon none other beſides them; ſeeing *God's Spirit* can never live in a carnal Mind: (s) *Fleſh and Blood ſhall not Inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.* Now by theſe *carnal* Perſons, we are not only to underſtand thoſe that are Luſtful, and Lovers of carnal Pleaſures; but thoſe alſo that follow the Motions of their corrupt Natures in Drinking, Eating, Cloathing, Lying, and all the other Pleaſures that delight Natures five Senſes, which may not be followed in any thing by one who would be renewed in the *Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt*, which ought to reign alone in the Chriſtian's Soul; and therefore it muſt not remain in ſubjection to its vicious Paſſions, which do always withſtand and reſiſt the *Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt*, and conſequently muſt be withſtood by any that would be true Chriſtians. Except this be done, we remain Anti-Chriſtians, and cannot have Communion with the *Spirit of Chriſt*, in as much as our corruption is directly oppoſite to this *Spi-*

(r) *Matth.* xii. v. 25. (s) 1 *Cor.* xv. v. 50.

rit of Jeſus Chriſt. For we need only follow this natural Corruption to go to Hell; as the following the Spirit of Chriſt, without any more ado brings us to Paradiſe.

§. 39. Now I am perſwaded of you, my Children, that ye have a deſire to be ſaved, and by conſequence to follow the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt; ſeeing for this end ye have forſaken the World and followed me; tho' in effect ye have not hitherto ſubdued your natural Inclinations, but do yet frequently follow them; and altho' ye *know* the Will of God, yet do ye not follow and obey it, when this holy Will is contrary to your natural Inclinations, becauſe of the *old Habit* ye have contracted of following your own Wills: Which Habit ye muſt entirely renounce and contradict in every the leaſt thing, as being altogether evil: From this proper or Self-will no good thing can proceed; and he muſt be his own Enemy, who is willing to follow his own Will, after he has diſcover'd that it is altogether evil, and will bring the Man to a miſerable End: For if one had true Love for himſelf, he would never do any Evil; becauſe his Evil-doings are the Cauſe both of his Temporal and Eternal Miſeries. He only can be ſaved, who renounces his corrupt Nature, which being become a (t) *Child of Wrath* and Perdition through Sin, can never attain Salvation; ſeeing (u) *No unclean thing ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*; and ſeeing the Scripture ſays elſewhere, *that Fleſh and Blood ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*; and Jeſus Chriſt ſays, that (x) if *a grain of Corn, ſown in the Ground, dies not, it ſhall not bear Fruit*; which is the Parable in the Goſpel, where Chriſt ſays (y), that *to be his Diſciples Men muſt deny themſelves*: All which Scripture-Sentences, and many more, abundantly prove that Man cannot be ſaved, if he ſubdues not the Corruption in which he is Born, and the Sin in which he is conceived: He lives and dies in it, if he gets not the Victory over this Corruption, during the time of this miſerable Life.

§. 40. This alſo is the Reaſon why the Scripture ſays (z) that *our Life is a continual Warfare.* So that he that is unwilling to Fight, muſt yield himſelf up to his Enemy; and being conquered and overcome by him, continue a Slave to him for ever. And for as much as Man hath not a more cruel Enemy than his own Will, he ought to fight againſt it continually without any Intermiſſion: For when he has gotten the Victory over this Self-will, he has at the ſame time over-

(t) *Eph.* ii. *v.* 3. (u) *Rev.* xxi. *v.* 27. (x) *John* xii. *v.* 24. (y) *Luke* xiv. *v.* 33. (z) *Job* vii. *v.* 1.

come the Devil and the World, and is Lord and Ruler over all things.

§. 41. For he that hath ſubmitted his Will entirely unto God's Will, hath all that he deſires, and diſregards all that he hath not; ſeeing he Wiſhes for nothing but what God gives him, under whom all things are ſubjected. And becauſe he hath ſaid (*a*), *I will fulfil the Deſire of thoſe that Love me*; it follows of Conſequence, that he who is reſigned unto the Will of God, hath all his Deſire fulfill'd; ſeeing he deſires nothing but the Will of God, he is content with all that happens, and as well ſatisfied in Adverſity, as when he is in proſperous Circumſtances; having a ſure Knowledge that the Will of God, who Governs him, deſigns him nothing that's Evil, and that every thing iſſues into Good, unto thoſe that ſerve him faithfully. This, my Children, is the happy Condition of the Perſon that has overcome his Self-will, and ſubjected it to the Will of God. He Ruleth over all Things, and has overcome the Devil, who cannot any longer aggrieve or ſeduce him. He is not any longer afraid of any thing, waiting for God's Order and Diſpoſition in all Things, without any Raſhneſs or Wilfulneſs for the future. Such an One may truly ſay with St. *Paul* (*b*), *It is not any more I that live, but Jeſus Chriſt liveth in me*; ſeeing he is dead unto his Self-will, and God alone liveth in him, where he worketh all ſort of Good.

§. 42. And all theſe Felicities are to be purchas'd by doing only a little Violence to, and reſiſting the Inclinations of our Self-will, and the ill Habits of corrupt Nature; which is no better than a ſtupid Beaſt, that ought in all its Ways to be kept under the management of Reaſon; or otherwiſe it will precipitate it ſelf into a thouſand Evils; and like an unbridled Horſe run headlong into all ſorts of Dangers and Miſchiefs: Wherefore it were much better to keep the Bridle on this Self-will, to make it turn at the Pleaſure of God's Will in every thing, that we may be eternally Happy; than to give it a free Scope, during the ſhort time that we have yet to live, and ſee our ſelves at laſt precipitated by it into Miſeries that ſhall be Eternal. It would be a bad choice for one to chuſe his own proper Will, which is continually Evil, inſtead of chuſing the Will of God, which is conſtantly Good, and giveth Reſt to the Soul; whereas Self-will troubles and diſquiets it with remorſes of Conſcience, for having follow'd the ſame, which he now laments; ſeeing it is whol-

(a) *Pſal.* cxlv. 19. (b) *Gal.* ii. 20.

ly

ly Corruption, he ought continually to War againſt it, that he may have ſubdued it before he dies, by exerciſing himſelf to renounce his own Will, denying it whatever it deſires, and entertaining it with whatever is contrary to its Wiſhes.

§. 43. This is the true Way to get the Victory over our Enemies; nor do I know any ſurer way of Salvation, than that of renouncing the corruption of our Nature, that we may ſubmit our own Will to the Will of God in all things. There wants not much Study, to learn this Leſſon. There's no need of frequenting Schools, Colleges, or Univerſities for this, ſeeing the Exerciſe of *renouncing ones own Will, is alone capable to* Perfect *that Perſon, and make him a Saint in a little time.* God having created him in all things holy and perfect, he ſhould preſently return to his Perfection, if his Self-will did ceaſe to operate in him. For it is only this corrupt Self-will that ſeparates God from our Souls. This is what he has frequently made known unto me; to the end that I ſhould declare it alſo unto others, to make them return and enter into the Regeneration in the *Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt*, who has ſaid in his Goſpel (c) *I am not come to do my own Will, but the Will of him that ſent me*; to ſhew that all Perfection conſiſts in the renouncing our own Will, that we may ſubmit it wholly to the Will of God.

§. 44. And ſeeing Jeſus Chriſt has done this to give us an Example, we muſt of neceſſity renounce our own Wills, that we may live to his Spirit, and in the ſame Submiſſion and Reſignation that he was in to the Will of his Father. This St. *Paul* had done likewiſe, when he ſaid (d), *I live not any more, but Chriſt liveth in me.* The meaning is not that Chriſt's mortal Body, lived in his Body, but only that Chriſt's Reſignation to the Will of his Father liv'd alſo in this Apoſtle, and ought to live in the Souls of all that deſire to be regenerated in this *Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt*; without which Regeneration (e), none can be ſaved. A thing that few conceive, tho' it be moſt evident and true.

§. 45. For God cannot know the Figure of his own Image that he created in Man, ſo long as he ſees it cloath'd with that Corruption, wherewith Sin hath diſfigur'd it: nor can he admit into the Court of Heaven a Figure ſo monſtrous as Man is become, by Reaſon of his Sin, which has render'd him Brutiſh, Ignorant, Groſs and Wicked; whereas God had

(c) *John* vi. v. 38. (d) *Gal.* ii. v. 20. (e) *John* iii. v. 3.

created him Divine, Wiſe, and Agile, Pure and Good. Yea his very Body was bright and luminous, and more tranſparent than Chriſtal; and his mind was fill'd with Wiſdom, knowing God and all Nature. He had Dominion over all the Elements, Beaſts, Plants and Metals; giving Laws to all theſe things, which obey'd him as their Lord, and were ſubject only to the Will of Man. For the Air tranſported him whitherſoever he pleaſed; the Water ſupported him ſo as he might walk upon it; the Earth opened for him to walk in it when he pleaſed, and the Fire warm'd him with a gentle Heat; having nothing of burning or ſmoak in it. In a word, nothing could hurt Man; the Water could not drown him, nor the Air carry bad influences into him, nor the Earth bemire or pollute him, nor the Beaſts bite him, nor Iron cut him, nor Stones or Wood bruiſe or wound him. For all theſe things (which God had created for Man) miniſtred all for his Delight and Contentment.

§. 46. And had Man continued Faithful in the LOVE of his God, he had remain'd to all Eternity in that glorious State in perpetual Joy and perfect Contentment. For it was Sin that introduc'd Uneaſineſs, Chagrins, Troubles, Fears, and Diſpleaſures upon Man's Spirit; and Pains, and Drouſineſs, and Wearineſs, and Infirmities, and Diſeaſes, and Death upon his Body. God created none of all theſe, ſeeing he never made any Evil, and all theſe are Evil and hurtful both to Man's Body and Mind. Man being made wholly Good in himſelf, could not be touch'd by any Evil, as not being ſuitable to his Nature, ſeeing he was created impaſſible. But Sin coming in upon this Maſter-piece of God's Works, marr'd and corrupted all this beautiful Work, and brought in Diſorder, Intemperance, Malignity, and all ſorts of Miſery and Misfortune, both Bodily and Spiritual upon all the Creatures.

§. 47. So as God could not any more diſcover the work of his own Hands in Man, nor in all the other Creatures, which he had created for Man's Pleaſure only. For neither God himſelf, nor the Angels, had need of any material thing, as being pure Spirits; ſo that the whole material World that we ſee, was created only to be an Entertainment and Delight for Man, as Man was made only to be the Pleaſure and Delight of his God, which the Scripture proves, informing us how God ſays (f), *My Delights are to be with the Children of Men.* Hence, my Children, ye may eaſily comprehend, that

(f) *Prov.* viii. 31.

ye

ye are created for no other End, but to *Love God*, and *to delight your ſelves in him*; even as he was pleas'd *to be delighted with us*. Nor moreover will ye ever be able to diſcover any other end for which Man was created, but only to delight himſelf in God; ſeeing all that we obſerve in Man comes to nothing, even in the Eyes of our Human Reaſon.

§. 48. For Man, from his Birth to his Death, brings nothing to Perfection: He is born in Pain, Lives in Miſery, and Dies in Diſtreſs and Anguiſh. God could not create Man for this End, ſeeing all theſe things are Evil: And God cannot be the Author of any thing that is not Good. Yea all that Man does alſo, during the courſe of this Life is Evil: and ſo cannot be ordain'd or appointed by God. For as ſoon as Man comes into this miſerable World, he muſt learn to eat, and to walk, and to ſpeak, and cloath himſelf, not having ſo much addreſs or dexterity in any of theſe things as a Beaſt. Then muſt he with great Pain and Labor, learn to Read, Write, or Study; or ſome other Art or Science for cultivating his Mind, or he muſt continue Stupid and Ignorant: And after he has with much Labor learn'd theſe things, they are of no greater Uſe to him than to get him a little Nouriſhment, and a covering wherewith to hide that nakedneſs which Sin caus'd in him: for before Sin Man was cloath'd with Light, and wanted not any other covering. Thus in all the Proceedings of Man from the Womb to the Grave, we can ſee no end for which he has been created, but that of loving and delighting in God: Seeing he is born in Pains, and lives and dies in Miſery, coming to no other Iſſue but Death, which reduces his Animal Spirits to nothing, and his Body to Rottenneſs: which things God could not have in his View and Aim, when he created Man ſo Beautiful and ſo Perfect.

§. 49. For certain then, ſome evil Thing has crept into the good Works of God, and has ſo far prevail'd, that the Good is no more to be obſerved and perceived in them. For we ſee with our Eyes, and hear with our Ears, that Man is a Veſſel fill'd with all ſorts of Evils. He has Miſeries and Pains in his whole Body, is ſubject to innumerable Maladies, and to Death it ſelf, without one Moments aſſurance of Life. His Spirit is yet more infirm than his Body, and it is my Opinion, that there is not one Perſon who lives after his corrupt Nature, that is not Hypochondriacal, that is, Fooliſh, or out of his Wits in ſomething, ſome in one Subject, and others in ſome other. Hence it is that Mens Wills are ſo often Diſcordant, and they are continually Fighting and Quarrelling with one another. And of this fooliſh Malady,

ſpring Mens different Opinions in Matters of Faith and Religion, every one imagining that his Sentiments are the beſt, even tho' perhaps they be the worſt, and moſt unaccountable, becauſe this Diſtemper of Mind, makes him take Evil for Good, and Good for Evil. Sin has made the Soul of Man ſo Bruriſh, as he cannot now make a right Judgment, nor diſcern Truth from Falſhood: For now after he has loſt his good Senſe and Reaſoning, thro' Sin, he judges only by his corrupt Fancy. He is not now any more induſtrious, but only to do Evil, wherein the Devil aſſiſts and abets him. Hence it is we find Men ſo ſubtle and ingenious in compaſſing Honors and Riches, and ſo weak and ignorant in doing Good, and acquiring true Vertue. They cannot ſo much as comprehend wherein it conſiſteth; ſo ignorant has Sin made Man in what concerns their Salvation and Things Eternal, that they underſtand not the material Things which they ſee with their Eyes, hear with their Ears, and touch with their Hands; and not being ſenſible unto any thing, but to their corrupt Nature, they live in the Forgetfulneſs of God, and of the End for which they were created, and both in their Lives and Death are like unto the Beaſts that periſh.

§. 50. I am not ignorant that many ſpeak of Vertue, and of Divine and Spiritual Things; yea, likewiſe of Things Eternal, and that all Chriſtians confeſs with their Mouth that there is a God; but their Works bely their Words, ſeeing all their Actions are done as if there were no God, aiming only at the Earth; ſome for getting Money, others for Honor, others for Pleaſure, others for Sciences, others for Fame and Renown, or other Earthly Things: And Men ſpend their Lives as if they were created only for theſe Things, and look'd for no Eternity, and therefore are at no Pains to acquire the Divine Vertues, nor to love a God whom their corrupt Eyes cannot behold.

§. 51. **Lo!** this is the miſerable State to which the Men of our Days are reduced; and how they walk inſenſibly in the Shadows of Death, contenting themſelves, if they have whereupon to live here, and wherewith to ſupport themſelves in their State, Honors and Reputations among Men like themſelves; though all theſe Things are vain, neither giving them an Eternal happy Life, nor conducing in the leaſt to their Salvation. Whilſt Men are pleaſed and ſatisfied if they can poſſeſs all theſe Things in this World, and look for Eternal Happineſs, after they have walk'd directly contrary to the Deſigns that God had in creating them, which were none but this, *That Men ſhould place all their Love and*

Delight

Delight in God their Creator only. But they will find themſelves deceived, and ſhall know too late at their Death, that they have not done that for which they were created, and ſhall be baniſh'd out of God's Preſence, as they have formerly baniſh'd his Law and his Deſigns out of their Mind and Memory.

§. 52. For if Men had been mindful of theſe, they ſhould have found more Delight and Pleaſure in God, than they could do in all thoſe things that periſh; and it is Witchcraft, or an Infatuation of Mind, that makes Man to take Pleaſure in Eating, Drinking and Recreations, in getting to himſelf Honors, Riches and Pleaſures, that paſs away, and other Temporal Things that continue ſo ſhort a while, and can do no more but flatter the Senſes with imaginary Pleaſures, ſuch as cannot give entire Contentment and Satisfaction to the Soul of Man, which cannot be ſatisfied with leſs than God himſelf ‡; having been created capable to love him, and every other amiable Object, being nothing in Compariſon of him, ſuch as cannot in any wiſe ſatisfie the Divine Soul; for all other Pleaſures are Vain and Earthly, and not worthy of a Man. Wherefore it is much to be wonder'd, that one ſhould ſet himſelf to love Objects ſo unworthy of him, paſſing by him that is ſo amiable, the Accompliſhment of all Perfections, who created Man to be loved by him, and for no other End.

§. 53. But, generally ſpeaking, all Men at preſent are under this Infatuation or Enchantment of Spirit, and lay out all their Thoughts, Studies and Pains only for Temporal Things; thus blindly following one another, without any Thought of their laſt End. And the Habit is by this means ſo ſtrongly rooted, that it appears to them impoſſible to do otherwiſe; eſpecially now that they think they do well, when their Actions are not reprehenſible before Men. They think themſelves likewiſe wiſe, and worthy of Honor, when they are skilful in acquiring Temporal Things. Poor Chriſtians! who ſet themſelves at ſuch a Diſtance from their Maſter Jeſus Chriſt, and yet think they do well, and hope to follow him in his Glory, after they have lightly eſteem'd him in his Shame! He will have good Reaſon to ſay to them, as he did to the *Jews*, (who had follow'd him in the Body) (*g*), *I know you not*: For none can be his Diſciples, but thoſe only

‡ *Pſal.* lxxiii. 25, 26. (*g*) *Matth.* vii. 23. *Luke* xiii. 26, 27.

who follow his *Evangelical Counſels* in this World; and however Men may underſtand theſe Counſels, and talk well concerning them, yet this will ſerve them in no ſtead, if therewith they don't alſo practiſe this *Evangelical Doctrine*; but it ſhall be ſaid to them as it was to the *Jews, who boaſted that they had propheſied in his Name, and that he had taught in their Streets, I know you not.*

§. 54. And how, I pray you, ſhould it be poſſible, that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould own the Chriſtians of this preſent Age for his Diſciples, when he ſees them do the direct contrary to what he has taught them? For he came into this World, that he might give them an Example, and teach them both by his Words and Works what they ought *to do*, and *leave undone*, in order to their Salvation; and he tells them, that *he is the* (h) *Way, and the* (i) *Door, that he who goeth out, and cometh in by him ſhall be ſaved*: Whilſt thoſe that are now call'd Chriſtians do all walk in another Way than that wherein Chriſt walk'd. He ſays, (k) *That whoſo believeth in him, does the Works that he hath done, yea, that he ſhall do greater Works*; but theſe Chriſtians ſatisfie themſelves with believing only in Chriſt by Speculations: They confeſs him with their Mouths, but their Hearts are far from him; ſeeing they would not ſo much as with their Fingers-end touch the *Croſs*, which Chriſt commanded them *to take up, that they may follow him.* They have an Averſion to his *Poverty*, they deſpiſe the *Lowlineſs* of Jeſus Chriſt, and with all this call themſelves his Diſciples. They ſeek for that which is fineſt and beſt, and moſt agreeable to their Senſes, though Chriſt enjoins them to deny themſelves. They will be ſaved, and have their own Wills accompliſh'd in all things, as much as in them lies; whereas Jeſus Chriſt declares unto them, (l) *That he came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter, and* (m) *to do the Will of him that ſent him.* Theſe Chriſtians ſtudy and labor, and are eager in the Purſuit of Money, and Chriſt commanded his Diſciples to (n) *forſake all that they had, that they might follow him*; yea, told them, *That whoſoever did not forſake Father and Mother, Wife and Children for his Name ſake, was not worthy of him.* And yet theſe Chriſtians are ſo attach'd unto theſe things, that they rather loſe the Life of Eternal Bliſs, than part with them.

(h) *John* xiv. 6. (i) *John* x. 9. (k) *John* xiv. 12. (l) *Matth.* xx. 28. (m) *John* vi. 38. (n) *Luke* xiv. 26, 33.

§. 55. So

§. 55. So that Jeſus Chriſt has good reaſon to ſay to theſe Chriſtians, *I know you not*; and that they ſhall have no part in his Kingdom, ſeeing they have not been willing to entertain his Doctrine, ſo as to practiſe it; which Doctrine they have not only neglected, but alſo deſpis'd, and done the quite contrary, and have made themſelves rather Antichriſtians than Chriſtians before God: though before Man they are called Chriſtians, and Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, when in effect they are diſcipled to the Devil, who conforming himſelf to the corrupt Nature of Man, feeds them in the falſe Hope of Salvation, by Gloſſes and Doctrines of Men, who have invented falſe Reaſonings to perſwade one another that they ſhall be ſaved, though they live after the Inclinations of their corrupt Nature; notwithſtanding that this Corruption be as much the Enemy of God as the Devil is, both having equally fallen in Diſgrace with God, for their not complying with the Deſigns he had in creating them, ſeeing both the Devil and Man were made capable of loving God.

§. 56. But they have removed their Love from him, and ſet it upon ſome other thing beſides him. The Angel fell in Love with himſelf, becauſe of the fair Angelick Qualities which God had communicated to him: And Man withdrew his Affections from God, and placed them upon the beautiful Creatures which God had created for him. Thus are theſe two Creatures fal'n into the ſame Sin, and have merited the ſame Damnation, the Angel becoming a *Spiritual*, and Man a *Material Devil*; with this Difference only, that Man has a Time for Penitence, whereas the Devil has none, but remains in his Damnation without any Hopes of Releaſe, which will be Man's Caſe alſo, if he continues in the Corruption which Sin brought upon him.

§. 57. Nor muſt Man hope to be ſaved, if he does not renounce his corrupt Nature, if he does not ſubdue it, and totally die unto it, that he may be renew'd in *the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt*. And this Regeneration is no other thing but the entire Mortification of the Motions of this corrupt Nature, our not obeying them in any thing, becauſe nothing comes thereof but Evil and Sin. So as one that lives according to the Evil of his corrupt Nature, and dies in the Deſires of complying with it, remains a Material Devil, as the Angel is a Spiritual one, and after his Death is as incapable of Converſion as the Spiritual Devil: For God has aſſign'd unto Man no other Time of Penitence for his Sin, but this ſhort and miſerable Life only, which, once paſt, cannot be recall'd any more.

§. 58. See

§. 58. See, my Children, how far they are stray'd from the Way of Salvation, who chuse to live at their Ease, and in Prosperity in this World, instead of walking in the narrow Way, which Jesus Christ has mark'd out for us; and how true that is which he has said in his Gospel, (o) *That the Way is narrow that leadeth unto Life, and there be few that walk in it.* Ought not ye to be afraid left ye perish, if ye continue in this broad Way that leadeth to Perdition, where there be so many that walk in it? Were it not more adviseable to enter into the narrow Way which leadeth unto Life, and rather to strive to overcome this Corruption, which Sin has introduced upon the Nature of Man, than by following the Motions of your Nature, to have nothing to look for but the frightful Sentence of, (p) *Depart ye Cursed into Everlasting Fire; for I was hungry, and ye gave me no Meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no Drink; naked, and ye cloathed me not; in Prison, and ye did not deliver me; sick, and ye visited me not; a Stranger, and ye took me not in,* &c.

§. 59. All which things spoken by the Great Judge unto the Person that shall be condemn'd unto Hell, do in Substance signifie nothing more but this, namely, that he was thus sentenced, because he had taken off his Affections from God, that he might love himself in his corrupt Nature: For Man is so dull in himself, that he could not understand any thing of the Scriptures, if they delivered those things that they would have him to know, in short and substantial Terms only. For Example: Were it thus written in the Scriptures, that God will say in the last Judgment, *Go ye Cursed into Everlasting Fire, because ye have withdrawn your Affections from me, that ye might love your corrupt Nature*: Every one would excuse his own Procedure by Pretences and Reasonings, that God might not be clear when he judged; seeing we hear those that are most estranged from God, saying they love him, and that they are not willing to follow after any Evil. It is for this Reason the Scripture makes use of Terms accommodated to Mens Stupidity, saying, that they have not given unto God Meat, or Drink, or Apparel, or Lodging, when he stood in need of it, though in effect God cannot stand in need of any thing, possessing all within himself. Only that he would give Men plain and palpable Marks, whereby they may know if they have loved God, or if they have loved themselves; seeing the *Love of God* cannot dwell in Man's Heart, but it must needs produce the Effects of Charity to his Neighbour;

(o) *Matth.* vii. 14. (p) *Matth.* xxv. 41, &c.

nor

nor can it be that Man has renounced his corrupt Nature, ſo long as he purſues his own proper Eaſe and Intereſt without any Concern for the Miſery or hard Caſe of his Neighbour.

§. 60. Whereby we may underſtand, that the Sentence of Damnation is pronounced againſt Man for this Reaſon in effect, that he hath not loved his God, and hath ſo much lov'd his corrupt Nature; that he chuſeth rather to hurt his Neighbour than to aſſiſt him in his Need for the Love of God; or that he is unwilling to help his Neighbour, leſt there ſhould not remain enough to ſatisfie his corrupt Nature, which thinks it has never enough for its Satisfaction. And when the Judge adds, *Inaſmuch as ye have not done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe, ye have not done it unto me.* This is only to let us know, that whatever Man does from the Motive of his Love to God, God looks upon it as done to himſelf; and that he who omits to aſſiſt his Neighbour in his Need, neglects God himſelf, and ſhews evidently, that the *Love of God* is not in him. And therefore to the End that Men might try themſelves by outward palpable Marks, he tells them, the Cauſes of their Damnation are ſuch, namely, *That he was a hungry, or thirſty, or naked, or in Priſon, ſick, or a Stranger, and Men did not help him in his need*; for which they have merited Eternal Damnation. As if God would have them to know, that they are damned, becauſe they have had no Charity, but have withdrawn their Love and their Affections from God, that they might love themſelves; becauſe Damnation depends ſolely upon the Want of the *Love of God*, and that all thoſe Works of Spiritual Mercies are only the Leaves which the Tree of *Charity* bears in that Soul where it is planted.

§. 61. To confirm this, that it is only *Charity* that is the Cauſe of Mens Salvation, we need only examine what St. *Paul* ſays of Charity, after he has explain'd what Conditions ought to go along with it, he adds, (q) *That though you ſhould give all your Goods to feed the Poor, and your Bodies to be burnt, yet without Charity it profiteth you nothing.* Had the Apoſtle underſtood the Judgment-Sentence, as blind Men do now explain it, he could not have made any Queſtion of the Salvation of thoſe that had given all their Goods to feed the Poor; but would have promis'd Salvation to them that had but parted with a ſmall Share of their Superfluities, ſeeing there could not have been found ſo many of Chriſt's little Ones hungry, thirſty, or having other Neceſſities, as that a

(q) 1 *Cor.* xiii. 3.

juſt

juſt Man could lay out all his Goods to the Feeding ſuch kind of Poor. Upon this account does the Apoſtle admoniſh the Chriſtian, that the Scripture ſpeaks not of Mens being ſav'd or damn'd in the Judgment of God, for their having given their Temporal Goods to the Poor, ſeeing the Apoſtle condemns even thoſe that had given all their Goods to feed the Poor, ſaying unto them, *That this will not profit them without Charity.* Which makes it abundantly evident, that none ſhall be ſaved but ſuch only as are at their Death endued with true *Charity*, which ought always to have the Conditions deſcribed in the ſame Place by this Apoſtle.

§. 62. For that which is now called *Charity*, is of no Account before God; and we ſhall find our ſelves diſappointed at the Day of Judgment, when we think to plead for our ſelves before that Great Judge, that we have given ſome of our Goods to the Poor, that we have given Meat to the Hungry, Drink to the Thirſty, that we have cloathed the Naked, entertain'd Strangers, or viſited the Sick; ſeeing all theſe things may be done from the Motions of Nature, from human Reſpects, from a natural Complaiſance, or that we may have the Name of being charitable; and all theſe Ends having a Reſpect only to this preſent Time, cannot have an Eternal Recompence; Nor will Chriſt for all theſe things ſay unto any, (r) *Come ye Bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Beginning of the World.* Becauſe this Kingdom is prepared only for thoſe that ſhall have complied with God's Deſigns that he had about 'em when he created them, which were, that they ſhould delight themſelves in God, as he was willing to have his Delights in Man. Lo, this is in Subſtance the only Reaſon why God will either ſave or condemn Man.

§. 63. It is not God that damneth, as the Ignorant imagine, ſeeing no Evil can proceed from him. He ſaves infallibly all that will continue in his Love, and delight themſelves in him; but all thoſe that renounce his Love, that they may take their Delight in any thing that is not God, they damn themſelves, by withdrawing themſelves willingly from the Source of all Good, that they may precipitate themſelves in all kinds of Evil, which conſiſts in the Privation of all Good, and is what they call Hell.

§. 64. That is the thing wherein the Salvation or Damnation of Man does conſiſt, who being created free †, has it in his Power to chuſe either to continue in the *Love* of his God, or to place his Affections upon other Things beſides

(r) *Matth.* xxv. 34, &c. † *Eccleſ.* xv. 14 *ad* 17.

God;

God; and it will happen unto him according to the Choice he ſhall make, and no otherwiſe. For he impoſes upon himſelf that Hopes to be ſaved by the Rules of Men, or by their divers Opinions wherein they place their Salvation; ſeeing ſome Promiſe it to thoſe that ſhall have given ſomething to the Poor, ſupplied the Hungry and Thirſty, cloathed the Naked, lodged Strangers, viſited the Sick, *&c.* becauſe the Scripture ſpeaks of theſe things in the laſt Judgment, though after all they are only the outward Marks or Signs of the *Charity* that ought to reſide in the Bottom of the Soul, where Man ought to *love God with all his Heart.* And when he is fully poſſeſs'd of this Love, *he ſhall be ſaved, if he gives but a* (s) *Cup of Water in the Name of God*; which is much leſs than the giving Meat, or Drink, or cloathing, or lodging, or viſiting the Sick, and doing other Works of Mercy; ſeeing the great Matter is to do any of theſe things to God's little Ones, or in his Name, and for the Love that we bear to him: For God needeth nothing, and is able miraculouſly to ſupply all the Neceſſitous and Indigent, without the Intervention of Men. Of this we have ſufficient Evidence in Jeſus Chriſt's feeding Five Thouſand Perſons with Five Loaves and Two Fiſhes. Wherefore Man ought not to think of meriting Salvation by reaſon of his good Works, or that the Judge in the laſt Judgment will ſave him, becauſe he has done ſome either Spiritual or Temporal good Works; ſeeing Man's Salvation comes of God alone, who deſign'd it for Man even before his Creation, when he was not yet able either to do or merit any thing.

§. 65. But when a Man ſhall appear in the laſt Judgment, bearing the outward Marks of the *Charity* that he has within, in his Heart; and when it has been out of pure Love to God that he has aſſiſted his Neighbour in his Need, and done this in the Name of God, then ſhall he hear the Judge's bleſſed Sentence, which he will pronounce to the Comfort of all ſuch, (t) *Come ye Bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you,* &c. Not for the Cup of Water, or for what ye have given to the Poor, but becauſe *ye have continued in my Love, and have anſwered the End for which I created you, by delighting your ſelves in God, knowing that he alſo is pleaſed to have his Delights with the Children of Men.*

§. 66. And leſt Man might deceive himſelf, thinking himſelf to be in the Love of God, when he is very far from it, God has been pleas'd that he ſhould make Proof of himſelf, to ſee if for the Love that he bears unto

(s) *Matth.* x. 42. (t) *Matth.* xxv. 34.

God

God he has given Meat, or Drink, or Cloathing unto God's Children that were in Neceſſity. And theſe Marks will bear Witneſs unto all Men at the laſt Judgment, that ſuch Perſons have preſerv'd the *Love of God*, and aim'd at the End for which God created them, to the end that all may know the Righteouſneſs of God, and ſee wherefore one is damn'd and another ſaved by the *External Marks* of an *Internal Charity*, which is not known but unto God alone, but made known unto Men by the outward Effects of it: For it is impoſſible that he who (w) loves God, ſhould not for his ſake love his Neighbour alſo, and do unto his Neighbour as he would do unto God himſelf, if he ſaw and felt him, as he does Man, who is made in his Image and Likeneſs.

§. 67. All which Things, my Children, are not rightly comprehended by the Men of this Age, who lay the Streſs of their Salvation and of the Perfection of their Souls upon External things, without reflecting, that except they ſpring from the pure Love of God, they are not profitable for us. For it is moſt certain that one may do all ſorts of good Works, and yet nevertheleſs be ſinning in them. Wherefore it requires ſome Diligence to diſcover the End for which we do any Work of Mercy, and alſo the Perſon to whom we ought to do it. For ſhould one give Meat or Drink to a Drunkard or a Glutton, Money or Riches to a proud, avaricious or ſlothful Perſon, he would by his Gifts co-operate with them in their Sins; ſeeing all that he gives to ſuch Perſons, is uſed by them to the encreaſing of their Sin and their greater Eternal Damnation. But the Chriſtians of this preſent Age do, thro' the Interpretations of Men, put Good for Evil, and Evil for Good, placing Salvation where it is not to be found. How many are there who will have Men ſaved through the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, though they live without Charity, or the LOVE of God. It is a damnable Invention to promiſe Salvation to Perſons that live and die out of the *Love of God*; who have not in their whole Life done any the leaſt Action purely for the *Love of God*: As thoſe are generally diſpoſed, who are taught to believe, that [without Regard to this] they ſhall be ſaved through the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt; they live and die in their *Self-loves*, coveting the Riches, Pleaſures and Honours of this World, and with all this hope for Salvation through an erroneous Conſcience, which comprehends not the Neceſſity of dying in the Love of God, in order to their being ſaved: Though all the Laws (x) and the Prophets, and Chriſt himſelf, do ab-

(w) 1 *John* iv. 20, 21. & v. 1, 2. (x) *Matth.* xxii. 37, 38.

ſolutely

ſolutely declare this Neceſſity of loving God, ſeeing Man is created for no other End but this *Love*.

§. 68. Under the Law of Nature, the Neceſſity of loving God was imprinted on the Hearts of all Men, by the Favors that God had diſpenced to them, in framing them out of nothing into ſo beautiful a Creature, adorn'd with ſo many Perfections, that it was a little God, reigning over the Elements, the Beaſts, Plants and Metals, and all other things which God had created for Man †, having conſtituted him Lord and Maſter of all theſe things; which Favors might have been ſufficient to make Man continue in the Love of ſuch a Benefactor, without any other Laws or Conſtraints.

§. 69. And now when Man had fal'n from this Love, to delight himſelf in ſome other thing than God, he did in his Paternal Care begin to lay his Commands upon Man, forbidding *Adam* to eat of the Tree of Knowledge, leſt the Delight of his Knowledge ſhould entice his Affections, which ought not to move but to God alone. And after this Man had tranſgreſſed this Commandment of God, and had eaten of the Tree, of which God had commanded him that he ſhould not eat, God made him be driven out of the Earthly Paradiſe, leſt he ſhould yet more forget the Love of his God, delighting in all the good and beautiful Things that were in that Paradiſe of Delights: Fearing moreover, leaſt Man by eating the Tree of Life that was in that Paradiſe, ſhould live for ever in the Misfortunes and Miſeries in which he had plung'd himſelf by his Sin, and that inſtead of doing a Temporal Penance for his Sin, he ſhould have been bound over to an Eternal one, or at leaſt of a very long Duration (ſeeing this Tree of Life had a Quality that kept Men alive, and it was not to be wiſh'd that Man ſhould live long in ſo much Miſery, which his Sin had brought upon him, in which State he would likewiſe have been capable of withdrawing himſelf ſtill farther from the Love of God, that he might love himſelf, and the other Creatures.) Therefore it was God's great Favor to drive him out of the Terreſtrial Paradiſe, after his Sin. For being once fal'n into the Love of himſelf, he would always have delighted ſtill more in that *Terreſtrial Love*, to the Prejudice of the *Love of God*, for which he was created.

§. 70. And all this Paternal Care that God diſcovered for Men, is by them, through their Ignorance, judged Chaſtiſement and Cruelty, becauſe they comprehend not God's Goodneſs, and the Love that he bears unto them. They believe

† *Gen.* i. 26. *Pſal.* viii. 6 *ad* 9.

that

that God in his Anger drove Man out of the Terreſtrial Paradiſe, that he might puniſh him, with the Loſs of that Place of Delights, though he did it only to deliver him from greater Evils, as a prudent Parent takes the Knife out of the Hand of his Infant, to prevent the Hurt it may ſuſtain by it. But this Heavenly Father ceaſes not his Love and Care for his Children, notwithſtanding their Murmuring and Complaints, no more than a natural Parent would forbear to take the Knife from his Child, becauſe of its Crying, knowing that it is only through Ignorance or Weakneſs that his Child is grieved to part with a Thing that might hurt it. Thus in like manner has God done hitherto, and will always do by Men, what he knows to be beſt for them.

§. 71. For tho' Men be wicked and ungrateful, yet God continues ever good, and not any evil thing can ever proceed from him. When God ſaw that Man wandred from his *Love*, and tranſported his Affections unto terreſtrial Objects, even after his Expulſion from the Paradiſe of Delights, delighting himſelf in corruptible things, of much leſs Beauty, Virtue, and Perfection, than were thoſe of the earthly Paradiſe; and that they all fixed their Affections upon divers viſible and ſenſible Objects; as upon Covetouſneſs, Luxury, and the like; forgetting God, deſpiſing Father and Mother, giving way to malicious and angry Paſſions, even ſo far as to kill their Neighbour, and to bear falſe Witneſs againſt him. Then did God give Men Injunctions and Prohibitions by the Hand of *Moſes*, that by theſe they might come to know their Failings and Sins, and refrain from them, and return to the Love of God which they had formerly forſaken. For tho' God laid his Commands upon *Adam* after his Sin (*x*), *That he ſhould eat his Bread with the Sweat of his Face*, and ſaid unto him, that *the Earth ſhould be Curſed for his Sake*; yet was this done for no other end, but only to recover Man to his *Love*: and that he finding this mortal Life ſo painful and laborious might withdraw his Affections from it, and ſeek after that place of Delight and Reſt which he had loſt by his Sin. In like manner God gave his Commands by *Moſes*, to the end that Men might diſcover all their Actions to be evil, and amend them, and not die in their Sins through Ignorance, forgetting that they were created for no other end but to *love God only*. Wherefore the firſt of all the Commandments that he gave, is, *that they ſhould love God with all their Heart, with all their Strength, and with all their Mind*: becauſe in this *Love*, and in

(x) *Gen.* iii. 17, 19.

no

no other thing, is the Eſſence of their Salvation included. For all the other Commands and Prohibitions that God has given by *Moſes* are only *Means* to come at this *Love*, by ceaſing to do Evil. Theſe ill deeds are evident Tokens that the Perſon who commits them does not love God; ſince he that loves him will worſhip him, and not take his Name in vain, nor bear falſe Witneſs againſt his Neighbour, nor rob him, nor kill, nor covet the Goods or Wife of another: all which things are Marks whereby to diſcover if one truly loves God.

§. 72. But foraſmuch as Sin does always cloud the Soul, it was impoſſible that it could diſcover its Sins, and how it had forſaken the Love of God, if God himſelf had not made this known to it by his Commands, and by his Prohibitions of doing Evil; ſeeing Man always imagines he does well, till he has good Evidence to the contrary: So as none could have believed that they had forſaken the Love of God, and ſet their Affections upon evil Things, had not God of his Goodneſs and Mercy given Commands unto Men by *Moſes*: The Darkneſs being at that Time ſo thick, as every one thought he loved God, and did that which was good, when he lov'd only Vanities, and his Thoughts run continually upon Evil. For he who ceaſes to love God, withdraws from all Good, and overwhelms himſelf in all Evil, which is only the Privation of all Good. And becauſe Sin had ſo blinded the Soul of Man, as he neither ſaw nor thought of theſe Truths, God has given him divers Commandments, to the End that Man might prove himſelf by the Teſtimony of ſo many Evils, wherewith his Conſcience has been overcharged ſince his forſaking the *Love of God*; and might condemn himſelf, and repent and amend, in caſe he deſires to be ſaved.

§. 73. Behold from whence the Commandments which God gave unto Men by *Moſes* have proceeded, and the Reaſon why God gave them: which was only that he might call Man back to his Love, and let him ſee by how many ſorts of Ways he has wander'd from it, as by loving himſelf, his Eaſe, and Riches, and Honors, and by ſetting his Affections upon every thing that was profitable for this preſent Life. In which Man would never have believed he did Evil, had not God made all theſe things evident unto him by his Commandments; he had died in all ſorts of Sin through Ignorance, and thus through his own Fault had periſh'd Eternally. For Man was bound to love his God, his Creator, for ſo many Benefits received of him, without any other Laws and Commandments, than the Being, and the other good Things that he had received from him. Natural Reaſon and Conſcience

were Obligation enough to this, without being conſtrain'd to it by the Force of Laws. Beſides, God never forces any Perſon to the Obſervance of his Laws. He leaves them at Liberty, promiſing them his Bleſſing, if by obſerving theſe Laws they return to his *Love*; warning them likewiſe of many Curſes, if they live and die out of his Love; in which State all ſorts of Evil are included, as every kind of Good is included in this *Love of God*, which may well be call'd *Paradiſe*, as the *Privation of all Good* may be called *Hell*; all ſorts of Evil being in this Privation, as every good thing is to be found in the Poſſeſſion of this *Love*.

§. 74. And I know of no other *Paradiſe*, but the Enjoyment of the Love of God; nor any other *Hell*, but the Privation of this ſame Love; becauſe all the Evils that can be named are Nothings, which God never created, and not any thing can have a Being but that to which God has given one: And he having given none unto Evil, this Evil cannot be any other thing, but an unhappy Privation of Good, as a Diſeaſe is nothing but the Privation of Health; and no ſooner does Health repoſſeſs the Body, than the Malady is annihilated in it; as there is no Poverty in him that poſſeſſes Riches, nor any Grief in a Perſon that is full of Joy, nor any Diſpleaſure where there is full Contentment; becauſe all theſe Evils conſiſt in the Privation of all the good Things that are the Contraries of all theſe Evils. So as in effect there cannot be any other Paradiſe but the *Love of God*, nor any other Hell, but the Privation of this *Love*, though Men give ſeveral different Names both to one and the other.

§. 75. For we commonly ſay, that it is always fair and pleaſant in Paradiſe, and make Children believe that they ſhall have Sugar'd-Sops in Paradiſe, with many other Reveries and Imaginations of Men, who cannot comprehend that all ſorts of Joy and Felicities are found in the *Love of God*; and therefore they deſcribe this Paradiſe by all thoſe things which delight their Senſes, in which they feel their greateſt Pleaſure. Thus thoſe that delight in Muſick ſpeak of the harmonious Melody of Paradiſe: Thoſe that are taken with the Pleaſures of the Palate, furniſh out their Paradiſe with delicious Fare: The Lovers of Sleep make Paradiſe a Place of ſweet continual Repoſe; and the *Turks* have in their Paradiſe as many beautiful Women as you pleaſe. Thus do blind Men bring in their imaginary Delights into Paradiſe, every one according as he has felt ſenſual Pleaſures in this World, becauſe they have not taſted the Pleaſure there is in *loving God*. In like manner they imagine, that there are as many Tor-

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ments in Hell, as they have felt Things painful to their Senſes here, ſuch as the Extreams of Heat and Cold, of Fire to burn, Ice to freeze, Poiſon to drink, Serpents and venomous Beaſts to be eaten, Blows and Wounds, Hunger and Thirſt to be endur'd. Finally, Men imagine that in Hell there ſhall be all ſorts of material Torments, like thoſe that their groſs Senſes ſuffer here in this World, becauſe they ſee only with Eyes of Fleſh, and know not that the Torments of the Mind are beyond all Compariſon more ſenſible and violent than all thoſe that the Body can ſuffer in this World. They are likewiſe ignorant, that the *Privation of the Love of God* will make Man more miſerable in Body and Spirit after Death, than if in this World he had been ſeiz'd with all ſorts of Diſeaſes, Infirmities, Pains and Miſeries that can be imagin'd, and all had come together at the ſame time upon him; becauſe the Soul and Body of Man, when they have put off their mortal Fleſh, ſhall be much more ſenſibly affected with the Pleaſure and Pain that they feel, than they could be of all the Pains that they could ſuffer during the Time that they were covered with their Mortality, which is only as it were a thick and heavy Sackcloth, which covers Man's whole Body, ſince his Fall.

§. 76. And all theſe Coverings of Mortality ſhall equally periſh, as well theirs who live well, as theirs who live wicked Lives; but the Bodies themſelves, that God created for Man, ſhall never periſh, neither the Good nor the Wicked, but ſhall live eternally happy or miſerable; which is the Reſurrection of the Dead that all Chriſtians ought to believe; for this internal Body ſhall riſe again, but not that Bag of Corruption wherewith Sin hath cover'd it: which Corruption is no other thing, but a miſerable Privation of that Glory wherein God had placed Man at his Creation; having made him bright, and agile, and ſubtile, and glorious, ſo very reſplendent, as there iſſued out from all the Pores of his Body; even on the Outſide, Gleams of Light, as the Stars in the Firmament, or the Rays of the Sun; which cover'd his Body, with ſuch ſhining Splendor as mortal Eyes could not behold it, but they muſt die with Joy and Amazement. For you might ſee as many luminous Rays proceeding from all the Parts of his Body, as there are now little Hairs iſſuing out of all the Pores of it; nor needed he any other Habit or Covering than that reſplendent Light which ſtream'd forth from all the Parts of his Body: So as this Divine Body, ſo tender and ſo delicate, is much more ſenſible of Joy and Pain, than our groſs Bodies, that are cover'd with Mortality; and therefore the

Bodies of the Damned ſhall ſuffer more ſenſibly the Burning and Smoak of Fire, Cold, Hunger, and other Pains after Death, than they could ſuffer them during this Life, though none of theſe Evils ſhall be ſo groſs and material after Death, as in this Life.

§. 77. Yet ſhall they ſuffer all ſorts of Evils eſſentially in their Bodies and Spirits, as if they burnt in the Fire, or lay in the Snow; becauſe all theſe Evils are the Works of their own Hands, which could not proceed from God, which likewiſe can never come to an End no more than Man himſelf. But all theſe Evils ſhall fall to the Share of the Damned, and they ſhall enjoy them as their Portion for ever, if they do not in this Life draw back from theſe Evils, that they may recover the *Love of God*, which was the End that God had when he created them. For if Man dies in his Sin, he ſhall ſuffer eternally, both in Body and Spirit, all the Pain that his Sins have been the Cauſe of in Nature, in as many different Manners as he has committed divers Sins in this World.

§. 78. And this by the righteous Judgment of God, who never does any Evil, nor damns any Perſon, but only permits Man to act in that Liberty in which he was created; and thus Man damns himſelf, and makes himſelf obnoxious to as many Pains as his Sins have brought upon both his Body and Spirit. And this is no other but the Wages of his Works. If he dies with many Sins, he purchaſes to himſelf many Evils; and if he dies with fewer Sins, he ſhall reap his Sorrows in due Proportion: For it is not God that puniſhes Men neither after this in Hell, nor here in this World, as ſome ignorantly imagine; but Man through his own Sins becomes his own Tormentor, withdrawing himſelf from the *Love of God*, the Source of all Good, he at once falls into all kinds of Evil, which is the Privation of all that's good. For if Men enquired narrowly into it, they would find, that no Evil happens to them in this Life, but what they themſelves have been the Cauſe of; but Man's Spirit being light and inconſtant, he forgets himſelf in his Wandrings, and when he feels himſelf ſuffer under any Evil, he imputes this Evil unto ſome Foreign Cauſe, or unto God himſelf, as he does alſo oftentimes blame God as the Cauſe of his Damnation. Yea ſome wretched Impoſtors there be, who are not afraid to ſay, that God has predeſtinated ſome part of Mankind to Damnation, and endeavour to prove their Lyes even by the Authority of the Holy Scriptures. This comes of their great Ignorance, and becauſe they have forgotten the End for which God had created them, which was only that they might love God, to

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the End that God alſo by a reciprocal Love might have delighted himſelf in the Children of Men.

§. 79. This then being ſuppoſed, as indeed it is true, we cannot doubt but the Men of this preſent Age are running into Hell with full Career; ſeeing they live ſo little in this *Love of God*, and are ſo ſtrongly addicted to the Love of themſelves, that it would appear fooliſh in any that would endeavour to lead them back unto this Divine *Love*, which they know not, nor underſtand it any more, thinking they live well, and ſhall be ſaved, if they do nothing that Men can lay hold on as Evil, and dying in the Love of themſelves. Be not ye, my Children, led aſtray to periſh with theſe blind Offenders, but lift up your Heads, and hearken unto what God now teaches in his laſt Mercy; open your Eyes, that ye may ſee this Light of Truth, *That no Perſon that dies out of the Love of God ſhall ever be ſaved*; and *That no Perſon can love God, if he hateth not himſelf.* Theſe are Sentences which God has often confirm'd unto me, and aſſured me of the Truth of them, and that all the Laws and Commandments that God has given unto Men are but ſo many Means to recover them unto his *Love.*

§. 80. And when God ſent his Son Jeſus Chriſt into this World, covered with Mortality, it was with no other Deſign, but only to recover Men unto his *Love*, from which they were ſo far gone aſtray, as they were not ſenſible of their Wandrings, but liv'd in Forgetfulneſs of God, and of the End for which they were created. And foraſmuch as this Evil was gradually become inveterate in Man, God did at laſt pity their Ignorance and Frailty, and ſent them his Son Jeſus Chriſt to call them back from their Wandrings, by making them underſtand their Errors, and the Means to reform and grow better; and how by theſe Means they might return to the *Love of God*, which they had forſaken. This is the Deſign of Chriſt's Coming into this mortal World, not that he might ſuffer the Pains that are due to Man's Sins, leaving them to perſevere in their Sins, as ſome Ignorants would have it underſtood by their damnable Comments upon the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt: For there is no Poſſibility of applying the Merits of Chriſt unto thoſe that will not put in Practice his Evangelical Doctrine, and none ſhall ever be ſav'd but thoſe that die in the Love of God.

§. 81. Now the whole *Evangelical Doctrine* is but ſo many Means to withdraw Man from Sin, that he may be brought again to the *Love of his God.* Thus if this Law enjoins *Poverty of Spirit*, it is to inform Man, that Covetouſneſs hath

withdrawn him from the *Love of his God*, and that he cannot return to this Love, except he give over coveting the good Things of the Earth. And when the *Evangelical Law* bids us be *humble in Heart*, and *chuſe the laſt Place*, it is becauſe Men have ceaſed from *loving of God*, that they may love themſelves, eſteeming themſelves worthy of Honor and Glory, though they merit nothing but Shame and Confuſion; which they not knowing, did therefore want a Doctrine contrary to their Errors and Ignorances, that might lead them back to this *Love of God*, which their own Pride had made them loſe. And when Chriſt declares unto Chriſtians, that (y) *He came into this World, not to do his own Will, but the Will of him that ſent him*; it is to teach Men that by following the Will of their corrupt Nature, they had ceaſed to accompliſh the Will of God, and to love him, that they might fulfil their own perverſe corrupted Wills; and that they cannot be ſaved, unleſs they renounce their own Wills, and obey the Will of God, and are by theſe Means recovered again unto his Love.

§. 82. See how Jeſus Chriſt is come to remedy our Diſeaſes, deſiring to cure them by Medicines that are contrary to our Infirmities. Whilſt theſe ignorant Men will be commenting upon this Evangelical Law, as if it were *impoſſible to obſerve it*, as they ſay alſo it is *impoſſible to keep the Commandments of God*; though both theſe Laws have in them no other thing but Remedies for our Evils, which God of his infinite Goodneſs and Mercy has been always ſending unto Men, to draw them back from the Damnation, into which they were going to precipitate themſelves. And all Men had periſh'd in their Ignorance, if our Heavenly Father had not had the Goodneſs to recal them by Laws and Commandments, and if Chriſt had not come to give them a particular Account of all thoſe Things that had withdrawn them from the *Love of God*, or from their Eternal Salvation; teaching them both by his Works and Words what they ought to do, and what to forbear for the Recovery of their Salvation, by reaſſuming the *Love of God*. And all, as many as have received this Goſpel-Law, and follow'd Jeſus Chriſt, have been ſaved; for by denying themſelves, they have return'd unto the *Love of God*. This hath been God's laſt Mercy unto wicked Men, that forſake the *Love of God*, forgetting the End for which they were created. For we are not to look for any other Laws after this Goſpel-Law, ſeeing Jeſus

(y) *John* vi. 38.

Chriſt

Chriſt came *in the laſt hour*, and no more perfect and compleat Law will God ſend any more unto Men. To be a Chriſtian, and to obſerve the *Evangelical Doctrine*, has hitherto been, and will always be to the end of the World, the indiſpenſible conditions of our Salvation.

§. 83. This is what Men do not ſufficiently conſider, thinking themſelves Chriſtians, becauſe they are baptiz'd and bear that Name; yea, ſometimes aſſerting, *That Men cannot live now, as thoſe of the Primitive Church liv'd*; and demeaning themſelves as if Chriſt's Law had been limited to the times of the Primitive Church, and there were no neceſſity of obſerving this Law now, as if God were mutable in his appointments or ordinances, and would deſtroy what he hath appointed and eſtabliſh'd for the Salvation of Men. A thing that cannot be ſpoken without Blaſpheming againſt God: For inſmuch as he is immutable and eternal in all his Decrees, and cannot ſhow greater favour unto Men, than he has done in giving his Evangelical Law, for diſcovering unto them both their Sins and the means alſo of returning to his Love.

§. 84. For if this Law had not been given, all Men muſt have periſh'd thro' their ignorance, ſeeing they did not any more know God, nor had any more for their Religion, but Letter and Tradition, following their corrupt *Natures*, as the Brutes do, as the Rules of all their Morality: And with all this the Jews thought themſelves God's People, and that they ſhou'd be ſaved in the end. And if Jeſus Chriſt had not come among them with his *Evangelical Doctrine*, they muſt all have periſh'd without remedy. Yea, without ſo much as diſcovering their miſery if Chriſt had not told them plainly, (z) *Ye that make your boaſt in the Law, do deſtroy the Law by your Traditions.*

§. 85. And ſuch as was the State of the Jews, when Jeſus Chriſt came in the mortal Body, ſuch now at this time is the State of Chriſtians, who, in very deed, have now no other thing for their Religion, but the Letter of the Goſpel, with the Comments and Traditions that Men have raiſed upon it. Becauſe of this, all the World is now in a much worſe condition than the Jews were in when Chriſt came into the World; ſeeing all now have, as the Jews then, departed from the *Love of God*, after they have received the light of Truth by Jeſus Chriſt; which is a more horrid guilt, than to Sin through Ignorance, as the Jews did, who through frailty did by degrees forget that they ought to Love God above all things, becauſe of their Rabbins Expoſitions of this Law of God. May

(z) *Matth.* xv. 3. *Joh.* vii. 19. and *Rom.* ii. 23.

not I ſay with Truth, that the Chriſtians of this Age are much worſe in this reſpect, than the Jews, ſeeing they not only forget the Law of God, but do alſo therewith altogether deſpiſe it.

§. 86. For it is the Doctrine of many Preachers, that *it is impoſſible to keep, or obſerve the Law of God.* Could there be a more powerful and effectual means contriv'd to make the Law of God be rejected and deſpis'd, than to hear thoſe whoſe Duty it is to teach the People to put it in practice, teach them on the contrary, that it is impoſſible for them to keep it? By which we may ſee evidently, that we are now in the days foretold by the Propher, when he ſaid plainly, *They that lead you, make you to err* (a): For what error can be more dangerous than to perſwade ignorant People, that they cannot keep the Law of God, which was given them only, that through the obſervance thereof, they might return to the Love and Knowledge of God? (†)

§. 87. For if the Wiſdom of God had not thought the obſervance of the Law neceſſary for Man's Salvation, this Divine Wiſdom would never have enjoyn'd any Laws, becauſe God would have Man altogether a free Creature, with whom he might find his delight: For if he had pleas'd to have Man his limited Slave, he would not have been able to tranſgreſs his bounds no more than the Elements, and Beaſts, and Plants, and Metals; all which do by natural inſtinct ſerve only for the ends for which they were created. But God deſigning to have one Creature nobler than all the reſt, to reign over all theſe inferiour Creatures, he created Man as it were a little God, free, and unlimited, without any Laws or Commandments, that he might Love his God out of a free and generous Choice, without any Law or Conſtraint. Wherefore the Law may with juſt grounds ſtily be ſtil'd *The Daughter of Sin*, this Law being truly engendred by it, and not of God, who will not conſtrain any Perſon to any thing, that he may leave Man the uſe of his Free Will unto all Eternity. It is very true, that when we ſpeak of this Law, we generally call it, *The Law of God*, as indeed it is given unto Man by God himſelf, but this was after his Sin only. When this had occaſion'd the Law, God himſelf made him know by that Law, that man's own Sins had procur'd it, and this he did out of great mercy that he might recall his People to his Love, which they had loſt by loving other things beſides God.

(a) *Iſa.* iii. 12 (†) *Matth.* xxii. 37, 40.

§. 88. So

§. 88. So as God's Laws are only winning Admonitions unto man to recall him unto his Duty from which he departed. So far are they from being insupportable burthens, as those ignorant Jews, and especially the present Christians, do equally give out, saying that the Laws of God are such heavy burthens, as it is impossible for them to bear them. Thus taking God's mercies, and the great Love that he bears unto men, (even when Sinners) for cruelties and impossibilities; which is great ingratitude towards the goodness and mercy of God, insupportable even in the judgment of corrupt men, who would not easily comport with such ingratitude from one of their equals. If after singular favours done to our equals they should blame and despise us as if we had injur'd them, or were putting them upon doing what were to them insupportable, (as those ignorants would have it be thought God deals by them) as if God stood in need of their observances, or of the maintenance of Laws, which their own Sins only have occasion'd.

§. 89. Are not these special Arguments and good Reasonings, to be inculcated into the People by these blind Guides, who have reserved no other doctrine but error and ignorance, which they teach men as if they were Truths, for which they readily receive them? Whence it comes that they have forsaken their God, and what the Prophet of God has said is true of the present times, (b) *They have forgotten God, and built unto themselves Temples*, or Altars: For we never saw so many Temples as there be now, where every one makes an Idol of his own Opinion, and prepare themselves Churches every one according to his fancy, calling them by diverse names, and performing in them different kinds of Worship, each after his own mode, without any foundation of truth or solidity. All these Churches being each founded upon the Opinion of some Person who had a mind to raise himself above the vulgar, that he might rule over them; and the poor People have followed them, thinking they did well to join themselves to some erroneous opinions of corrupt men, who are the very (c) *broken Cisterns that can hold no Water*, of which the Scripture speaketh: For after that God created them Vessels capable to contain the Divine Wisdom, they have gone to draw Waters of some inventers of novelties, who have suffered the true Wisdom of God to pass out through the Chinks of their craz'd minds, to make room for errors and lies, which they propagate in one another.

(b) *Hos.* iv. 6. and x. 1. (c) *Jer.* ii. 13.

§. 90. So that we know not now where to find the Truth, ſeeing it reſides neither in the Souls of Men, nor in any of their Churches. I know there is ſome Truth in every Church, wherewith they may colour their new Inſtitutions: For the Roman Catholicks ſay there's no Salvation out of the Church, which is very true: But I would willingly know of them, as I have enquir'd upon other occaſions, where this only true and ſaving Church is? To which they have not hitherto made me any anſwer. But God has given me to know that the only true Church is the Evangelical Doctrine, and that all who put this Doctrine into practice are Members of this Body, and that this alone compoſes the *true Church*; and not the ſo many different names and opinions that the preſent Chriſtians are engag'd to believe, ſeeing there is only one God, one Faith, one true Church united unto the Truth, which is God. And tho' thoſe that call themſelves Reform'd have one Truth in their Creed, namely, that Man cannot merit Salvation by his good Works, they have join'd a great many Errors to this Truth. As for inſtance; that therefore we need not do any good Works in order to our Salvation, which is alſo a Lye: For tho' God has created all men for Salvation in *Adam*, out of his own Grace and Mercy alone, before men had any being, or could merit any thing (God who is independent of all things, having no need of our Merits) yet our Faults and Sins lay us under a neceſſity or obligation to do good Works, that we may kill the corrupt old Man in us, that the new Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt may take Life in our Souls, which ever ſince the Sin of *Adam* are hurt and pierced with many wounds, which are not to be cured but by the repeated Remedies of good Works, which are ſo many divers Balſams and Medicines, according to the diverſity of our Sores.

§. 91. For how can a proud Man become humble (that he may have *Chriſt's Favour and Love* as he promiſes to give to the humble) if he does not exerciſe himſelf in often repeated acts of humility, chuſing the leaſt things for his own uſe, and *the laſt place*, as Chriſt adviſes him? (*d*) He will continue ſtill proud, yea, his Pride will encreaſe, if he does not reſiſt it by actions of humility, and force his Heart to be humble, which is not to be done but by the exerciſe of *Vertue* and good Works. In like manner a Glutton, or one that loves his Belly cannot become ſober according to the Apoſtles advice (*e*), if he does not accuſtom himſelf to Faſtings and Abſtinence; becauſe corrupt nature wou'd be always delighting it ſelf more

(*d*) *Luk.* xiv. 10. (*e*) 1 *Pet.* v. 8.

in thoſe pleaſures of the Taſt, and in Gormandizing, if it is not kept under reſtraint by Abſtinence and Auſterities: And how, I pray you, would an Avaricious Man get rid of Covetouſneſs ſo as not to offend God thereby, (ſeeing the Apoſtle ſays (*f*) *that all Coveting is Sin*) if he did not violence to himſelf in contemning the goods and honors of this World, which require Riches to ſupport and maintain them? And if this covetous Man gives not of his Riches to the neceſſitous and poor, how can he know if his Heart is looſned from coveting the good things of the Earth?

§. 92. The Caſe is likewiſe the ſame in regard of all other Sins, which muſt of neceſſity be baniſh'd out of the Soul of Man, by the contrary Vertues and good Works; or otherwiſe the Soul ſhall never attain to Salvation, tho' its Salvation depends only upon the mercy of God, who created Man for Salvation, beſtowing it upon him, even before he received his being, when he could not have merited any thing, nor done any good Work whereby he might merit it: Seeing *God hath no need of our Merits*, as the Reformed ſay alſo, fooliſhly concluding from thence, *that we need not therefore do any good Works to merit Salvation, but wait* for *all from Jeſus Chriſt, who alone hath merited all for us*; not conſidering that our Sins are an obſtacle and hindrance to that ſame Salvation which God does ſo mercifully beſtow upon us. And that of neceſſity we muſt remove this obſtacle of Sin, before we can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. This is the hope and end to which our Labours, and Faſting, and Prayer, and Watching muſt be directed; namely, to remove this Sin out of our Souls, which is ſo directly oppoſite to our Salvation: Which Salvation we cannot compaſs until we have ſubdued our Sins, ſeeing it is written (*g*) *that no unclean thing ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. Hence alſo we muſt conclude that only thoſe ſhall be ſaved who (*h*) *work out their Salvation with fear and trembling*, as the Apoſtle adviſes, who could not be ignorant how Jeſus Chriſt had made full ſatisfaction for Man, whilſt he ſo often admoniſhes them to *Watch and Pray* and *to be Sober*; and above all, (*i*) *to have Charity*. Might not one very well demand of this Apoſtle, why he adviſes Men to ſo many things, ſeeing Chriſt has given full ſatisfaction for them? Why need they Faſt, and Watch, and have Charity, when Chriſt has done all for them? Such Doctrine would be ſuperfluous, and ſuch Words and Actions are of no uſe to Perſons that are not

(f) *Rom.* vii. 7. (g) *Rev.* ii. 27. (h) *Phil.* ii. 12. (i) 1 *Cor.* xiii.

oblig'd to do any thing for their Salvation. And why then did this Apoſtle himſelf ſay (*k*), *I Chaſtiſe my Body that I may bring it into Subjection, leaſt Preaching to others, I my ſelf ſhould be a caſt away?* How could his Salvation be in danger, ſeeing Jeſus Chriſt alone had given full ſatisfaction? Was not he his well-beloved Diſciple, who might well claim an intereſt in the firſt applicarions of his Maſter's Merits? Why then did he *Chaſtiſe his Body?* And why all this fear of Damnation while he Preach'd to others? Might not he have ſet his mind to reſt with this Scholaſtick Doctrine, that *Chriſt hath given full Satisfaction?* And might not he in a fine ſpeculative way have applied unto himſelf the Merits of Chriſt according to what theſe new Doctors teach, who have invented a way to be ſaved that's well accommodated to corrupt nature, which is well pleas'd that it can live at eaſe; and being freed from cares may expect Salvation through another's Merit?

§. 93. This will be very agreeable to ſenſual Perſons, who have choſen their Paradiſe in this World, looking for one yet better in the other World by the Merits of another Perſon. As if eternal Life and Happineſs did properly belong to them after they have gone through the courſe of their Sins; as if God were oblig'd to beſtow it upon them, after they have in this World ſerved their corrupt Nature, which enclines them unto all kinds of Evil. This is a great deluſion grounded upon no other bottom but the imaginations of ſenſual and corrupt Men, who making light of the Commandments of Chriſt Jeſus, have contriv'd Comments whereby they might give the Semblance of Truth unto a Lye, and make Men hope for Salvation from imaginary Notions that have nothing of Truth or Reality in them.

§. 94. For if Jeſus Chriſt had deſign'd to ſave Men by his own Merits alone, he needed not have taken up, or cloathed himſelf with our Mortality. He needed do no more but only ask of his Father the Salvation and Redemption of Men who had fall'n by their Sins, as he had by his Merits formerly obtain'd the Remiſſion of *Adam*'s Sin, ſeeing God ſays (*l*), that *he fulfils the deſire of thoſe that Love him.* And none could Love God more than Jeſus Chriſt who was ſo intimately united unto his Father. He might have obtain'd the Salvation and Redemption of all Mankind by one motion of his Will, without any further proceedings, without becoming himſelf paſſible and mortal, without undergoing labour and pain, yea, Death it ſelf in coming to teach them: For what Doctrines did they

(*k*) 1 *Cor.* ix. 27. (*l*) *Pſal.* cxv. 19.

want

want, if he deſigned to ſave them by his Merits alone. There was no Neceſſity of preaching unto them, or giving them an Example, or ſuffering, or dying for them. Had he only ſignified unto his Father his Deſire for Mens Salvation, this had been enough to obtain it, without giving them any Laws or Precepts of Salvation; which would have been to no Purpoſe for thoſe that were to be ſaved by the alone Merits of Jeſus Chriſt. To what end hath God ſent ſo many Prophets unto Men, to inform them of his Will, to admoniſh and reprove them, declaring unto them from himſelf, (*m*) if ye keep my Commandments and walk in my Ways, ye ſhall have ſuch and ſuch Bleſſings beſtow'd upon you; and if on the contrary ye keep not my Commandments, and walk not in my Ways, ſuch and ſuch Curſes ſhall be your Portion, and ſuch Plagues ſhall certainly come upon you.

§ 95. Were this unhappy Predeſtination to have place, as thoſe Modern Doctors preach, why does God promiſe ſo many Bleſſings, and threaten ſo many Curſes unto Men, if they keep or keep not his Commandments? Should not he leave Men in their Sloth and Negligence, without requiring them to obſerve his Laws, or threatning them with Puniſhment if they did not, ſeeing they were to be ſav'd or damn'd according to what God had predetermin'd concerning them? And why, ſince the ancient Prophets, was Jeſus Chriſt pleas'd to become mortal Man, to do ſo many good Works, and work ſo many aſtoniſhing Miracles in their Preſence? What need had they to ſee all thoſe Wonders, who could not be the better for them, being predeſtinated unto Damnation? Why did Chriſt chuſe Apoſtles to preach his Doctrine all over the World, ſeeing Men needed not obey it, if it be as theſe Doctors preach, *That Men are too frail to keep the Evangelical Law*? Was God more ignorant of Mens Frailties than theſe new Doctors are, who would be excuſing them from impoſſible Obſervances? Did not he know the Strength of their contriv'd Interpretations and Diſcourſes for excuſing Men from obſerving his Laws? Is he to be prevail'd with by the Subtilty of their Arguments, to yield to the Salvation of Men, becauſe of their ſubtle Inventions of applying this Salvation to themſelves, through the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt; as if this Salvation conſiſted in the fine Speculations of attributing the Merits of Chriſt unto one's ſelf, and that all his Doctrines ſhould be of no uſe to thoſe who ſhall learn to appropriate his Merits unto themſelves? Surely, Children of God,

(*m*) *Deut.* xxviii & xxix.

ye

ye muſt be very weak in your Judgments to lay Streſs upon ſuch like Arguings, which have no Appearance either of Reaſon or Truth in them. And it muſt needs be true of thoſe that believe them, That the Devil has bewitch'd their Spirits to make them believe a Lye; and that they may die inſenſibly in this mortal Lethargy. For the Love of God, rouſe your ſelves, and never give ear to the Whiſperings of this Serpent, who ſings ſo ſweetly the Vigils of the Death of Human Souls, flattering them with Salvation, if they can but apply the Merits of Chriſt to themſelves at their Death. For I knew one that had lived without Care, morally well, laying the Streſs of his Salvation upon the Merits of Chriſt (as his Paſtor had made him believe:) But when God viſited him with a mortal Diſeaſe, and that he perceived Death approaching, he could not apply the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt unto himſelf, as he had thought to do, but found himſelf in ſuch Perplexity, as he knew not whither to turn himſelf, nor what to reſolve upon. All the Sins of his paſt Life return'd into his Memory, the Stings of his Conſcience tormented him, and the Fears of Hell took hold of his Soul; ſo as that he pray'd God with Grief and Tears, that he would be pleas'd to prolong his Life yet for ſome time, wherein he might bewail his Sins in the Abhorrence of that Doctrine which had made him live ſo long in Spiritual Sloth and Negligence, in the ill-grounded Hopes of the Merits of Chriſt, ſeeing he found nothing at his Death but Reproaches for his paſt Life, without any Conſolation or Hopes in the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt. This Relation I had from the Perſon himſelf, who told me with Tears in his Eyes, that he could never forget the Anguiſh that he was in, when he thought himſelf ready to die, after he had always thought that he ſhould be ſaved by the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, as his Preachers had induced him to believe.

§. 96. This ought to be a Warning unto you, my Children, if ye would eſcape the Devil's Deluſions, who lulls Men aſleep till Death, knowing that the Grace of Contrition rarely happens to any Perſon in thoſe laſt Extremities. Seeing then theſe Preachers, or their Emiſſaries, are induſtriouſly employ'd to make them die with thoſe Impreſſions, which they had given them during their Life; in which they do good Service to the Devil, who always redoubles his Temptations at the Hour of Death, and never leaves tempting Men till they are departed this Life, knowing well that after Death there is no more Remiſſion, as there is during all the time of this Life, even to the laſt Moment thereof. 'Tis for

this

this Reaſon that the Devil ſuffers many to live quietly without tempting them much, waiting for the Pangs of Death, wherein to overcome them, and drag them along with him into Hell.

§. 97. I pray God to preſerve you from this Misfortune, by giving you the Knowledge of the unfeigned Truth that leadeth to Salvation, that ye may not be amuſed with the Diſcourſes of Men, who, when they are themſelves deceived, do afterwards impoſe upon others. Have your Recourſe always to the Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt: This cannot deceive any Man, and is the (*n*) only Way that leadeth to Salvation: Out of this Doctrine no Perſon can be ſaved. From the Foundation of the World there never yet has been, nor to the End of it will there ever be any Perſon ſaved, but by the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt. For if Jeſus Chriſt had not merited the Grace of God, by his Fidelity to the Graces which he received of God his Father, he could not have obtain'd of him the Pardon and Remiſſion of *Adam*'s Sin, as he has conditionally obtain'd it by fulfilling the Penitence which God enjoin'd unto *Adam*; ſeeing the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt could not obtain but only a conditional Pardon, without encroaching upon the *Juſtice* of God, which ought to be extended abſolutely as far as his *Mercy* and *Truth*, foraſmuch as theſe Three Divine Qualities are and ſhall be always inſeparable in (*o*) the Divine Eſſence, and always concur in all God's Works infallibly.

§. 98. Now the *Truth* of God is, that he was pleaſed to (*p*) *make Man in his own Likeneſs*, and by Conſequence would adorn him with ſo many excellent Qualities, and make him reign over all the Creatures which God had created for Man, as God himſelf reigns over all. He would make Man abſolute Lord of this part of the Creation, ‡ giving him a free and unbiaſs'd Will, to do and leave undone whatſoever he thought fit; provided only that he lov'd his God, and own'd him always as his Sovereign Lord, Creator and Donor of all that's good. So that, according to the Word of God, (*q*) *Man was created in the Image and Likeneſs of God*: Wherefore the Scripture ſays, (*r*) *Ye are Gods, to whom the Word of God came. Juſtice* appears likewiſe in this Creation, there being nothing more juſt, than that God ſhould make a Creature in his own Likeneſs, with which he might take his De-

(*n*) *John* vi. 68. (*o*) *Pſal.* lxxxix. 15. (*p*) *Gen.* i. 26. ‡ *Eccleſ.* xv. 14 —— 17. (*q*) *Gen.* i. 27. (*r*) *Pſal.* lxxxii. 6. *John* x. 35.

light,

light, ſince he was pleaſed to create ſo many beautiful and perfect Creatures only for Man's Delight, over and above what was neceſſary for him; ſeeing Man ſtood not in need of ſo many Metals and Stones, as God has created for him, for the Suſtentation of his Life; and he might well have lived without ſo great a Variety of Plants and Flowers; all which things God created only to delight Man's Sight and Smell, together with ſo many Perfumes of Musk, Ambergreaſe, and other kinds of Aromatick Drugs and Odors, which Man might have ſpar'd well enough and liv'd; as likewiſe the ſo great Variety of Beaſts and Birds, with a Thouſand other kinds of Beauties, which are only for Man's Pleaſure and Delight, and not for his Neceſſities, which God had abundantly provided for, without the Addition of ſo many Things ſerving only for Delight, wherein Man might pleaſe and recreate himſelf. Why then ſhould not we allow God to form Creatures for himſelf, with whom he might take his Delights? Was he not powerful enough to do this? Yea, Juſtice and Reaſon required it, that after he had created ſo many delicious Things for Man, he ought at laſt to make a delightful Creature for himſelf; which accordingly he did, creating Man in his own Likeneſs: For ſuch was his good Pleaſure, as the Scripture alſo teſtifies, ſaying, (*s*) *Let us make Man in our own Likeneſs*: Adding farther, that *God reviewing all that he had made, found that it was all very good*: Seeing all his Three Qualities concurr'd in the Creation of Man. His *Goodneſs* appears in that he was pleas'd to make ſo perfect a Creature out of nothing, to be himſelf united to it, and to take his Delights with it; which is alſo verified by the Scripture, where he ſays, (*t*) *My Delights are to be with the Children of Men.* A thing that was as *Juſt* as *True*, that a God ſhould be delighted in the Works of his own Hands, ſuch as Man was, created in his own Image and Likeneſs, in which the Three Divine Qualities, *Goodneſs*, *Juſtice* and *Truth* did appear in full Perfection.

§. 99. But the Misfortune is, that Man, that beautiful and perfect Creature, has defaced the Work of God in himſelf, and diſfigured it to that Degree, that it is not now any more to be known. And now inſtead of reſembling his God, he is by his Sin become a (*u*) near Reſemblance of the Devil, ugly, and frightful, and imperfect in every thing, having changed his Goodneſs into *Malice*, his Juſtice into *Fraud*, and his Truth into a *Lye*. Of this the Scripture

(*s*) *Gen.* i. 26. (*t*) *Prov.* viii. 31. (*u*) 1 *John* iii. 3.

gives

gives aſſurance, ſaying, (*x*) that *All Men are Liars*: And elſewhere, (*y*) *There are none good or holy, but God.* And the Prophet ſays, (*z*) That *God having look'd down over all the Earth, did not find any Man doing good*, and reckoneth every individual, *no not one.* In another place he ſays alſo, (*a*) That *all Fleſh have corrupted their Ways.* And God ſays, (*b*) That *he will judge our Righteouſneſs*; which is a Sign that there is not now any more of that *Righteouſneſs* to be found among Men, which God gave them at their Creation, no more than of the *Truth* and *Goodneſs* with which God did then alſo adorn them. All theſe Virtues Man has loſt by his Sin, by chuſing to turn his Affections to the Creatures, and withdraw them from his Creator; thus fruſtrating, as much as in him lay, God's Deſigns of taking his Delights with Man, that he might pleaſe himſelf in things leſs than himſelf; for he had been (*c*) eſtabliſh'd Maſter and Lord over all the terreſtrial Creatures, which were all ſubjected unto him. And thus did Man ſubject himſelf unto all that which ought to be obedient unto him: having loſt God's Grace and Favour, he became God's Enemy, expoſing himſelf by theſe means to all kinds of temporal and eternal Miſeries, and depriving himſelf of the Enjoyment of all good, that he might render himſelf obnoxious to all kinds of Evil; as we are ſtill at this day groaning under the ſo many Miſeries of Cold and Heat, of Hunger and Thirſt, of Infirmities and Diſeaſes both of Body and Mind; the Beaſts bite and devour us, the Stones and Metals kill, the Water drowns, the Fire burns, the Herbs poiſon, the Air infects us, and the Wind drives us whither we would not go. In a word, all the Creatures are riſen in Rebellion againſt Man ſince his Sin, which before that were all his Servants, and obeyed him as their rightful Lord.

§. 100. And whereas before Man ſinned, his Mind was fill'd with Wiſdom, and Joy, and Contentment, and Peace; his Sin hath made him ignorant and uneaſie, peeviſh and melancholy, and more aukard and dull than a great many Beaſts, which are oftentimes found to have by Nature more Skill and Addreſs in conducting and ſupporting their Lives, than many Men. For we ſee the Ant foreſees the Winter coming, and makes her Proviſions in the Summer, that ſhe may not then be wanting the Neceſſaries of Life: Whereas abundance of Men, leſs provident than this little Animal, con-

(x) *Pſal.* cxvi. 11. (y) *Matth.* xix. 17. (z) *Pſal.* xiv. 2, 3. (a) *Gen.* vi. 12. (b) *Eccl.* iii. 17. *Pſal.* lxxv. 2. *vulg* (c) *Pſal.* viii.

ſume all that they get in the Summer, and therefore ſuffer a thouſand Hardſhips and Miſeries in the Winter; ſuch as Hunger, and Cold, and Diſeaſes, and ſometimes Death it ſelf, becauſe they have not made ſeaſonable Proviſion for their Neceſſities. A Horſe neither eats nor drinks more than what is neceſſary; whereas many Men are ſo irregular in their Eating and Drinking, that they do oftentimes ruine their Health, and haſten their Death by their Intemperance. The Dogs hide their ſuperfluous Proviſions under Ground, that they may return to eat of it as they have occaſion. How careful and aſſiduous is the Hen in hatching her Chickens, and guiding and preſerving them from her Enemies; whereas Man puts himſelf, and what belongs to him frequently in danger of his Enemies, for want of Forecaſt, yea, ruines and loſes his Soul alſo for not being ſufficiently aware of the Crafts of the Devil, his ſworn Enemy, who takes his Opportunity from Mens Spiritual Negligence, to deſtroy them. Man's own Sin is the Cauſe of all thoſe Diaſters and Dangers that come upon him; for by conſenting unto it, he makes himſelf God's Enemy, and deprives himſelf of all Good, which conſiſts in the Favour and Love of God, that he may give up himſelf unto all Evils which flow from the Privation of this Sovereign Good, without hope of recovering his Love, ſeeing himſelf condemn'd to the Abyſs of all Evils for all Eternity, without any Expectation of Relief.

§. 101. But Jeſus Chriſt (*d*) *the Firſt-born among all Men*, had Pity on *Adam* his Father according to the Fleſh, (*e*) and pray'd unto his Eternal Father for him, and for all Men, his Brethren, who were to iſſue from him; and hath by his Merit prevail'd with God for Mercy unto Man, together with the Pardon of his Sins, on Condition Men would perform the Penitence that was enjoyn'd them. So that we may truly call Jeſus Chriſt (*f*) *the Advocate and* (*g*) *Saviour of the World*, ſeeing he hath pleaded for, and obtain'd the Pardon of *Adam*'s Sin, unto all the human Race, and by this means has preſerved them from Eternal Damnation, to which they had willingly made themſelves obnoxious in the Sin of *Adam*. It is for this Reaſon that they ought alſo willingly to embrace the Penitence that was enjoyn'd them in *Adam*; ſeeing this Pardon had the Condition of Penitence which is annexed and knit unto it, that according as Men fail in the Penitence, proportionably do they come ſhort in the Pardon

(d) *Coloſ.* i. 15. (e) *Job* xxxii. 23, 24. (*f*) 1 *Joh.* ii. 2. (*g*) *Ibid.* cap. iv. 14.

alſo;

alſo: So that he who will not embrace the Penitence that was aſſign'd *Adam*, ought not to expect the Pardon which he obtain'd conditionally only, and not abſolutely. Wherefore thoſe Men are much deceived who go about to ſeek their Eaſe, and Pleaſure, and Contentment in this Earth, which is under the Curſe becauſe of Sin, where they are enjoyn'd (*h*), *to labour and till the Ground, that they may get their living out of it with the Sweat of their Face*; which the Apoſtle confirms, ſaying, (*i*) *That he who will not work, neither ought he to eat.* But this Law, this Decree, and this Penitence appointed by God, is quite forgotten among Men, who have laid aſide all Thoughts of Labour and Penitence, and are not willing to undergo it, but by Force and Conſtraint, as Slaves row in the Gallies, where they are bound, and chain'd, and whipt to their Work. This is highly diſpleaſing unto God, who requires a voluntary Labour and Penitence of Men (*k*), not ſuch as is forc'd or conſtrain'd; becauſe Sin being voluntary, the Penitence muſt in like manner be voluntary; otherwiſe it will not anſwer God's Judgment and Decree, ſeeing he who labours only that he may have Food and Raiment, does it that he may pleaſe or ſatisfie himſelf, and not God; of which Jeſus Chriſt admoniſhes Chriſtians, ſaying unto them, (*l*) *Labour not for the Meat which periſheth, but for that which endureth to Eternal Life.*

§. 103. But the preſent Chriſtians do not underſtand this Language, and do almoſt all labour for the Meat which periſheth, as if they were created only for the preſent Life; about which they are moſt careful, tho' they ſee all that come into this World dying and departing out of it before their Eyes, ſome old, others young; all deſcend into the Grave, after they have liv'd ſome ſhort time here, of what Quality or Condition ſoever they may be, Rich or Poor, Noble or Ignoble, every one pays what he owes to Death, without Exception of any Perſon; Princes, and Kings, and Emperors, do all owe this Tribute to Death, which they are forc'd to pay unto Nature: This ought to make this Life very contemptible, being ſo full of Troubles, and of ſo ſhort a Duration. But Men of corrupt Judgments eſteem it as their laſt End, labouring for it alone, and forgetting thoſe Things that are Eternal. If they can but have their Eaſe and Conveniencies in this Life, they reſt contented, without thinking of the future; ſeeing eternal Things do as little affect them, as they do the Beaſts which have

(h) *Gen.* iii. 19. (i) 2 *Theſſ.* iii. 10. (k) *Matth.* xvi. 24. (l) *John* vi. 27.

no Faith. For if Men had more Reaſon than the Brutes, they could not place their Affections upon a Life of ſo ſhort a Continuance, and Man would always be uneaſie, until he were at reſt in his Centre, which is God: as a Stone falling from on high, never reſts till it comes at the Earth, which is the Centre where it ought to reſt. Thus ought the faithful Soul always to be uneaſie, until it come to reſt it ſelf in God, who created it to this End; and whoever does otherwiſe, acts contrary to the Nature of his Soul, which can never be ſatisfied but in God; tho' there be few that aſpire after this Satisfaction, contenting themſelves, with the Swine, to be fill'd with the Meat that periſheth.

§. 104. And this cometh from Mens Ignorance, who have not ſufficiently underſtood that they are ſent into this World to perform Penitence (*m*), and for no other End; becauſe they are oblig'd unto this by the Sin of *Adam*: This becomes binding upon all his Poſterity, through the Promiſe which he made at that time for all the Men that were then in his Loins, who ſinned in him, and are all aſſign'd Penitence in him likewiſe without Exception; we muſt willingly accept of Penitence, if we would be ſaved; ſeeing Jeſus Chriſt has obtain'd the Forgiveneſs of the Sin of *Adam*, only for ſuch as ſhall accept the Penitence that is annexed to the Pardon which he has procur'd for Men from his Eternal Father. For ſuch as undergo this Penitence againſt their Will, are the Devil's Martyrs, who ſuffer with Rage and Regret the neceſſary Torments that their Sins have brought forth: And wicked Men are in the ſame Caſe when they don't ſuffer the Miſeries of this preſent Life willingly; for he who willingly undergoes any Fatigue, finds it much lighter to be born, than when he does it thro' Force and Conſtraint, tho' nevertheleſs he cannot avoid it.

§. 105. Wherefore, my Children, ye muſt retain this always in your Memory, That there is a *Neceſſity of doing Penitence in this World*; and firmly believe, that ye are ſent hither upon no other Deſign, but to fulfil the Penitence which God enjoyn'd *Adam* for the Sin which he committed; and that none can be ſaved thro' Chriſt's Merits, but only thoſe who ſhall willingly embrace the Penitence impos'd upon *Adam*, by the Merits and Prayers of Jeſus Chriſt to his Eternal Father, ſeeing he could not obtain this Pardon for Man without the Condition of due Penance for his Sin, without encroaching upon the Juſtice of God his Father, who

(m) *Luke* xiii. 6, 9.

could

could not by his Goodneſs alone pardon this Sin without the Concurrence of his Juſtice, ſeeing he will never do any thing that carries not along with it his three eſſential Qualities of *Goodneſs*, *Juſtice*, and *Truth*. Thus the undivided Trinity in God, (which are inſeparable from one another, and which many, to facilitate the underſtanding of theſe three Qualities that are in God, call three Perſons) tho' they be different in their Kinds, yet are they but one in God, as eternal and as powerful the one as the other; ſeeing not any one of them could have exiſted without the other: This is the true Faith which we ought to have in God, not diſputing about the high Myſteries of this Trinity. It is not Man's Buſineſs, a little Worm of the Earth, to deſcant upon the Divine Eſſence, and what there is in it. A ſingle Obedience to God, and Submiſſion to his holy Will, is much better for us, than to know what is in his Eſſence; this not being neceſſary to our Salvation. We are told, That an Angel was ſent to St. *Auſtin*, that great and wiſe Doctor, in the Form of a little Child, to inform him, that he might ſooner put all the Waters of the Sea, that great Ocean, into a little Ditch, than be able to comprehend the Trinity that is in God. This Example teaches us, that it is impoſſible for Man to comprehend this Divine Myſtery; but it's very poſſible to believe, that there are *Goodneſs*, and *Juſtice*, and *Truth* inſeparably united in God, and which do accompany all his Actions, and conſequently are to be found alſo in the Remiſſion or Pardon of *Adam*'s Sin, through his *Goodneſs*; enjoining him Penitence for it, through his *Juſtice*; and giving him Salvation according to his *Truth*, having promis'd, (*n*) that whenſoever the Sinner ſhall be converted, he will deal by him as if he had never offended.

§. 106. And *Jeſus Chriſt* being one with his Father, neither would nor could procure the Pardon of *Adam*'s Sin, without obliging him to do Penance for it; it being but juſt, that he who ſins ſhould bear the pain that's due to it, and ſhould alſo be converted, before he is pardon'd for it; becauſe God ſays, that *when the Sinner turns, he will pardon him*; but ſays not, as our new Gloſſers, *That albeit the Sinner find himſelf inclin'd to all kinds of Evil, yet ſhall he be ſaved nevertheleſs, if he can but apply to himſelf the Merits of Chriſt Jeſus.* Ye ſee, my Children, what a dangerous Cheat it is to promiſe Men Salvation, who live in their Sins, without Converſion and without Repentance, Conditions ſo neceſſary,

(n) *Ezek.* xxxiii. 16.

that Christ says expressly unto Men, (o) *except ye repent, ye shall all Perish.* Must we not hence conclude, that these blind Guides shall surely Perish, together with all their unrepenting Followers; seeing Jesus Christ, the Truth it self, has pronounc'd this Sentence of Condemnation? And if ye be once fully satisfy'd that *Adam*'s Sin could not be forgiven, except Penitence were annex'd to the Pardon of it, ye shall likewise know, that none shall be saved but those that practise the Penitence of an *Evangelical Life*, that they may give satisfaction for their own Sins: seeing Jesus Christ having the same *Justice, Goodness, and Truth*, as hath his Father, as being inseparably united to the same God, cannot desire to save Men by Goodness and Mercy alone, as these Casuists affirm, saying, *That those that can but apply his Merits unto themselves, shall be saved by those Merits alone*, which is a very false account; seeing Jesus Christ cannot be more merciful than his Eternal Father, who was pleas'd to pardon *Adam*'s Sin, but not without Penitence added unto, and affecting this Pardon.

§. 107. So that if Man falls short in his Penitence, he comes short of his Pardon likewise: Like a Merchant that barters his Wares, promising to deliver so much Cloath for so much Wine; if his party does not deliver him the Wine, neither is he obliged to deliver him the Cloath; seeing the bargain is void if one of the Parties fails in his part of Agreement: Or if the Buyer pays not for the Goods within the time he promises, the Seller is not oblig'd to deliver them. Thus it is with the Merits of Jesus Christ, who hath merited of his Father, the Remission of *Adam*'s Sin, for all those that shall voluntarily satisfy God, as to the Penitence that he has enjoyn'd: But those that shall not willingly accept this Penitence, neither shall they enjoy the Remission annex'd to it. In like manner, none shall be profited by the Sufferings and Merits of Christ, but only those that shall practically embrace his Evangelical Doctrine; this being the Covenant and Agreement which he made with Christians when he shed his Blood for them; namely, (p) *that they should be poor in Spirit, humble of heart, meek, peace-makers, loving Charity; and after his example suffering Persecution for Righteousness sake*, &c. These be the Conditions required of those that would partake of Christ's Merits; which failing, the application of his Merits faileth also; seeing they shall not be applied unto any other but those Disciples that are followers and imitators of Jesus Christ, who hath foretold them that they (q) *shall be afflicted, persecuted, and led before Judges, yea, and suffer Death also for his Names sake*: Adding, (r) *that*

(o) *Luke* xiii. 3, and 5. (p) *Matth.* v. 3, &c. (q) *Matth.* x. ii, &c. (r) *John* xv. 20. *Luk.* ii. 19.

this

the Servant is not better than his Maſter; and ſaying unto them, *if they have Perſecuted me, they will Perſecute you alſo*; *and in Patience (or ſufferings) ye ſhall poſſeſs your Souls.*

§. 108. But theſe modern Caſuiſts promiſe to the Wicked as well as the Good, that *they ſhall be ſaved by the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt*, being willingly unmindful of what he hath ſaid, *viz.* (s) *that he pray'd not for the World, but for thoſe that God had given him out of the World, which were his.* Seeing they belong unto God, and not unto the World, he prays his Father, that *they may be Sanctify'd in Truth by his Evangelical Word, which is Truth.* Ye ſee, my Children, in how contrary a ſenſe the Learned of our Age explain the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, perſwading Men, that *the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt cleanſe from all Sin*, as it is true that this Blood of Chriſt is ſhed for all that ſhall be his Diſciples; not for Peter *or* Paul *in particular*, as the Predeſtinarians do abuſively give out; as if God had choſen one part of *Adam*'s Poſterity to be ſav'd, and left another to be damn'd, which is by no means true; ſeeing *God is no reſpecter of Perſons*, nor will his *Juſtice* ever allow that of two Perſons equally culpable, one ſhou'd be Saved, and the other Damned.

§. 109. True it is the Scripture ſays, that God (u) *choſe* Jacob, *and rejected* Eſau, two Brothers of the ſame Birth: But this is only to ſhew that God chooſes the Good, and refuſes the Wicked; and not that he had any particular Affection for *Jacob* more than *Eſau*; for *Peter* more than *Paul.* Seeing he had choſen all Men in *Adam* unto Salvation, and had alſo ſaved and pardon'd them in *Adam* after his Sin, all equally thro' the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, not one excepted. As all periſh'd in *Adam*, ſo in *Adam* all are pardon'd; and all have alſo receiv'd the Condition of penitence in *Adam*, who then contain'd all Mankind in his Loins, which were ſeparated only by the production of his Poſterity. Upon this account, *Grace, Damnation, Pardon and Penitence*, had all equally place in all Men, who were then undivided in the Body and Will of one Man alone, who was created by God one only and undivided, out of whom all other Men were by Generation to proceed. And God could not ſave one part of this Body, or of this Seed, when it could not yet have done either Good or Evil ſeparately from the Will of *Adam*, who then comprehended in himſelf alone the Wills of all the Men that ſhould ever come of him. All in him gave their conſent to Sin; all in him were pardon'd for it *By the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt*: As all have likewiſe in

(s) *Joh.* xvii. 16, vi. 17. (t) *Acts* x. 34. (u) *Rom.* ix. 15.

him accepted of Penitence; none excepted but Chriſt alone, who had iſſued from *Adam* when he was yet Innocent, before his Sin. He is the only one that never contracted the Sin of his Father *Adam*, having had his Free-Will, before that ſeparation from *Adam*; and being in the uſe and exerciſe of his own reaſon, with which he never gave his conſent unto Sin, and is upon this account ſtiled the *Alone Holy*. (*x*)

§. 110. But Men not underſtanding the Scriptures, cannot know the Truths of God; they think I talk idlely, when I ſpeak of Jeſus Chriſt, as the firſt-born of *Adam*, tho' the Scripture calls him in expreſs terms, the (*y*) *Firſt-Born of every Creature*. Men do not commonly diſtinguiſh between Creation and Birth, and are not willing to underſtand it literally, that Jeſus Chriſt is truly the Firſt-born of all the terreſtrial Creatures, none of which did propagate, or generate before *Adam*, tho' they were all created before him; as the Scripture informs us, ſaying, that *God created all Things, and then afterwards created Man*. As we finiſh a Palace before the King comes to dwell in it; ſo did God in the beginning of the World furniſh all the Elements, Plants, Beaſts, and whatever beſides might be uſeful for Man, before he created Man himſelf. And as all things were created with Seed whereby to propagate their Kinds, ſo Man, as the Chief and Lord of all the other Creatures, did firſt of all produce Jeſus Chriſt, *the Firſt-born of every Creature*, as the Scripture ſpeaketh; in many other places alſo declaring this primogeniture of Jeſus Chriſt, as where it ſays by his own Mouth. (*z*) *Before Abraham was, I am*. And *David* ſpeaking of Chriſt, ſays (*a*) *The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, ſit Thou at my right hand until I make thine Enemies thy footſtool*. And who do you think, my Children, was the Lord that walk'd (*b*) with *Adam* in the Earthly Paradiſe, ſpeaking with him Mouth to Mouth? Who was it other than Jeſus Chriſt? Who was alſo the ſame that ſpake (*c*) to *Moſes* in the burning buſh, and with his Finger (*d*) wrote the Commandments upon the Tables of Stone, and let his back parts appear (*e*) unto *Moſes*. Know ye not that God being an inviſible and incomprehenſible Spirit, has no Feet to walk, nor Mouth to ſpeak, nor Finger to write, nor back parts to be ſeen: But God did all theſe things unto Men, by the Organ of Chriſt's Glorious Body, who made known his

(x) 1 *Sam.* ii. 2. *Luk.* i. 35. (y) *Coloſſ.* i. 15. (z) *Joh.* viii. 58. (a) *Pſal.* cx. 1. (b) *Gen.* ii. 15, &c. and *Ch.* iii. 8. (c) *Exod.* iii. 4. (d) *Exod.* xxxi. 18. (e) *Exod.* xxxiii. 22, 23.

Father's

Father's Will unto Good Men, as (*f*) to the ancient Prophets, to the (*g*) Patriarchs and all the Saints; as he does yet at this day communicate himſelf unto ſuch Perſons by his Holy Spirit.

§. 111. After Jeſus Chriſt has taught Men in his mortal Body, they need not ſee or hear any more by his Glorious Body. They have received the light of Truth, and want no bodily Viſions now to make them know the Will of God. This Chriſt himſelf gave the Woman of *Samaria* to underſtand, telling her, (*h*) *The time cometh, and is already come, when the true Worſhippers ſhall Worſhip God in Spirit and in Truth, and not in the Temple nor on this Mountain*, where formerly God had ſpoken to *Moſes* and the Prophets. But ſince Jeſus Chriſt has brought Light into the World by his coming in a ſtate of Reproaches, there wants not now any more Voice, or Thunder, or Lightnings, or Burning-Buſh, nor other material things, to make his Will known unto Men. He ſpeaks now to them in Spirit and in Truth; illuminating the Soul with Divine Light internally by his Holy Spirit, which operates in all Souls that are diſingag'd from themſelves, and from all Earthly affections; acting in them ſweetly and powerfully when the Soul is in peace and tranquility of Spirit. Then it hears like as it were a ſoft Wind ſurrounding it with joy, which makes it know what it ought to do, and what to forbear, both with reſpect to its own conduct, and that of other well-meaning Men.

§. 112. This is now at preſent God's method of communicating himſelf unto Men, who want no external ſigns or miracles, ſince the Doctrine of the Goſpel has been made known and confirmed by the Blood of ſo many Martyrs, which makes me ſuſpect all the ſigns and miracles that we ſee now, to be the Works of the Devil; and that all thoſe Prophets who boaſt of their ſeeing Angels, are all but falſe Prophets and Deceivers; experiencing in my ſelf how the Holy Spirit acteth in quiet and ſilence, and not in trouble and alarms, as ſome in our Days ſeek this World and Money, that they may reſtore *Iſrael* by ſtrength of arms, before they have overcome ſo much as one of their own Vicious Paſſions; and are ſtill living according to the inclinations of Fleſh and Blood, which are oppoſite to the Holy Spirit.

(*f*) *Pſal.* cxix. 6, 7. 1 *King.* xix. 9. *Iſai.* vi. 1, &c. *Ezek.* i. 26. viii. 4, &c. *Dan.* vii. 13. x. 6. (*g*) *Gen.* vi. 15, and 17, and 18, and 19, and 26. V. 2, and 28, 13, and 32, 24, &c. (*h*) *Joh.* iv. 23.

§. 113. But

§. 113. But ye, my Children, who are ſo happy as to know the *Truth* of God by his Holy Spirit, keep what you have, and go not out to ſee thoſe that ſay, *Lo Chriſt is here or there*! ſeeing he is no where to be found, but in the obſervance of the *Evangelical Law*, which is given unto Men as the laſt Remedy of their Evils; and we are not to look for any other, ſeeing Chriſt ſays himſelf, *that he came in the laſt hour*: For this Evangelical Law is as it were the laſt Mercy which God deſigns unto Men: Becauſe of this the Apoſtle ſaid to the Chriſtians of his times, (i) *if any Man teaches another Goſpel, let him be accurſed*; becauſe in this the Will of God is contain'd, together with all that which one ought to do or avoid in order to their Salvation. So that we are not to hope for Salvation by any other Means than this Evangelical Doctrine, which Jeſus Chriſt came to reveal to us as the laſt means of our Salvation.

§. 114. Whoſoever pleaſes may follow him; every one for himſelf; God lays no reſtraint upon any Man. Having created all Men free, he ſuffers every one of them to act freely according to their Will; and has prepared Grace and Glory for thoſe that ſhall obey his Laws, and provided Hell for the Wicked, who will not obey them; that he may give unto every one according to his Works, and not according to the Predeſtination of thoſe blind Men, who deſtroy the Holy Scriptures and God's Laws, by the gloſſes and inventions of their Sin-ſick Brains. They invent new Religions, Maxims, and Opinions, directly oppoſite to the Doctrine of the Goſpel; and promiſe Men Salvation by means and practices that are contrary to what Jeſus Chriſt Preach'd and Practis'd; flattering them with vain hopes of Salvation, though they keep not God's Commandments, nor the Evangelical Law, though they are without Converſion and without Repentance, under this pretence, that Chriſt has made full Satisfaction for them. As if Chriſt had deſign'd to Suffer and Die, that he might encourage Men in their Sins, and embolden them to commit ſtill more: Seeing in this manner he will ſatisfy as eaſily for many Sins as for a few. But theſe are all inventions that are prejudicial to the Salvation of many; and thereby the Devil has already drawn numbers into Hell with him.

§. 115. My Children, be ye upon your Guard againſt thoſe Perils and Dangers that are capable to (k) *ſeduce the very Elect*, and theſe that are reſolved to become true Chriſtians; ſeeing this Seduction has in it a ſpecious Colour of aſcribing

(i) *Gal.* i. 8, and 10. (k) *Matth.* xxiv. 24.

the

the Honour of our Salvation to the Merits of Chriſt, and not to one's own Merits: Tho' in effect they that would thus aſcribe the Merits of their Salvation to Jeſus Chriſt, deſign by this means to make him a Complice in their Sins, by waſhing them away as faſt as they commit them. The Reaſon of all which is, that Men have loſt the Fundamental Truths of their Salvation, and have willingly forgotten, *That the Penitence enjoin'd* Adam *for his Sin, is abſolutely neceſſary to all that will be ſaved; and that the Pardon that was granted to all Men in* Adam, *reaches no farther than thoſe that do voluntarily accept of, and practiſe this Penitence.* They are alſo willing to forget, *That the Evangelical Law is preſcribed unto Men for no other end, but to put them in mind of the Obligations they lie under to obſerve and practiſe* Adam's *Penitence and Converſion, if they would have the Benefit of the Pardon which he received of God, only upon Condition of Penitence and Converſion, and no otherwiſe.* Seeing *Adam* could not have been ſaved after he had received his Pardon, if he had not fulfill'd the Penitence which God had laid upon him, becauſe of his Sin. No more in like manner ſhall Men in general, nor any Man in particular, receive the Pardon of their own proper Sins, except they fulfil the Penitence which is preach'd in the Goſpel by Jeſus Chriſt, who ſaid, (*l*) *Except ye repent,* (or do Penitence) *ye ſhall all certainly periſh.*

§. 116. Nor know I any Words that can more peremptorily expreſs the Neceſſity of Repentance, than thoſe which Chriſt pronounced in his Goſpel; ſeeing by them the Sentence concludes abſolutely againſt all thoſe that will not perform the Penitence that was preſcribed by the Eternal Father when Sin began, and has been ſince confirm'd and practiſed by Chriſt himſelf; who obſerving, that Men had forgotten their Duty, and periſh'd in Impenitence, reſolved to come and recal them from their Wandrings, and both by his (*m*) Words and (*n*) Works to lay before them, how neceſſary it was for them to be converted to a ſalutary Penitence.

§. 117. For this end did he cloath himſelf with our Mortality, and took upon him the Reſemblance of a Sinner, that he might bear their Weakneſs and Infirmities; and by his own Example ſhew what Penitence is neceſſary for their Salvation, to the end that every Man might not feign to himſelf Penitences after his own Faſhion, thinking God will be ſatisfied with theſe; which could not be true, ſeeing Man being

(l) *Luke* xiii. 3, 5. (m) *Matth.* iv. 17. (n) *Matth.* xvi. 24. *Phil.* ii. 6, & 8.

as much corrupted in Mind as Body, could not make a right Judgment. As accordingly we ſee ſome faſt to Exceſs by way of Penance, or toil their Bodies, undertaking long Pilgrimages, or other laborious and painful Exerciſes, or over-do in their Works of Charity, giving ſometimes to the Poor without Diſcretion that which their own Family ſtands in need of; a Miſtreſs of a Family abandons the Care of her neceſſary Affairs, that ſhe may be conſtant in the Churches to hear Sermons, and to repeat long and often reiterated Prayers: And yet theſe be Perſons of good Inclinations that do ſuch things, leaving their Children and Concerns in great Confuſion, in the Belief that they pleaſe and ſatisfie God by ſuch their pious Exerciſes.

§. 118. The *Jews* thought to do after this manner alſo, cleaving to the Letter of their Law, without comprehending the Senſe of it; juſtifying themſelves by the Law, when their Works deſtroy'd the Power of it. They called themſelves the Children of *Abraham*, but were unwilling to do the Works of *Abraham*, who was ready to ſacrifice his only Son unto God, ſo entirely was he reſigned to his Will. But this People was become ſo Earthly, that they had not any more Knowledge of any thing Divine or Eternal; being ignorant, or at leaſt forgetful that they were created for no other end but to love their God, they had turned all their Affections towards the Earth, and to Fleſh and Blood: So that all they of the Houſe of *Iſrael* (who were *Jews*) had periſh'd, had not Jeſus Chriſt, their Brother, had Compaſſion on them, in letting them ſee their own Blindneſs, and how far they were departed from the End for which God had created them; which was, that they might love him with all their Heart, and with all their Strength, and with all their Mind, as *Moſes* had taught them, yea, had left it for a perpetual Memorial written upon a Table of Stone. And though God at divers Times ſent many Prophets after *Moſes* unto that People, yet did they remain inſenſible in their Miſery, not knowing how far they were departed from their God, thinking they did well in adhering to their outward Ceremonies, which were given them for no other End but to recollect their Senſes from the Wandrings of their Minds, which were ſo corrupted, that they apply'd themſelves only to what was Earthly and Tranſient.

§. 119. And to put a Stop to their wandring Thoughts, God gave them Precepts and Commandments by *Moſes* to make them think of God in all their Words and Actions, and for

no

no other end but this only; ſeeing (*o*) God ſtands not in need of the Works of Men, whether their Veſſels be clean or unclean, whether they be cloathed in White or Red, whether they eat of the Fleſh of Swine, or other bloody Beaſts. All theſe things are indifferent to God, who requires not any thing of Men, but *the Love of their Hearts.* But Men having departed from this Divine Love, do very much want divers means to bring them back again to it, by forſaking all thoſe other means that have been the Cauſe of their going aſtray from God their Creator. All which Things being perfectly known to God, he has given them Laws and Precepts, in the Obſervance of which they may recover the Love of God, that they have loſt for Matters of no Conſideration; as are the Conveniencies, Pleaſures and Riches of this World, by placing their Affections upon theſe, inſtead of directing them to God alone, as he had commanded them by *Moſes:* Which Commandments God had given them as ſo many Remedies for the divers Diſeaſes of their Souls. And for not applying theſe Remedies to the ſeveral Wounds of their Souls, they became worſe than before, and do ſtill grow worſe and worſe, becauſe Men are unwilling to make uſe of the ſafe and wholſome Medicines which God had prepar'd for them; though theſe poor Ignorants reject them, ſaying, *That it is impoſſible for them to keep theſe Commandments*; as if God would require Impoſſibilities of Men.

§. 120. A Thing that God can never do, ſeeing he always procures what is really good and advantageous for them; and therefore the Impoſſibility of obſerving theſe Commandments, is only in their corrupt Imaginations, and no ways in the thing ordain'd and appointed of God, who does always Good and no Evil; having never given any Laws or Commandments to Men, but ſuch as may aſſiſt them in recovering the Love of God. They are proper means for Men, whereby they may attain Salvation, as Ships are means for coming to the deſired Port; or Chariots, which conduct or carry Men whither they deſire to go, and *not Burthens heavy to be born,* as is alledged by thoſe ignorant *Jews*: And the Chriſtians of our Days alſo being in the ſame Ignorance, ſpeak after the ſame manner, ſaying, *The Evangelical Law is a grievous and inſupportable Law*; tho' Chriſt, the Truth it ſelf, ſays, (*p*) *My Yoke is eaſie, and my Burthen light*: Seeing it was out of pure Love to Men that Chriſt came to inſtruct them in the means whereby they might return to the *Love of God,* for which they were created,

(*o*) *Acts* xvii. 25. (*p*) *Matth.* xi. 33.

and

and not to overcharge them with insupportable Burthens, or to hamper them with forced Penances and Laws. Seeing he says so frequently, (q) *If ye will be my Disciples*; and *if ye will be perfect*. He says not, *I will have you, or make you to be my Disciples*; or, *I will oblige you to be perfect*; but says, He that will be perfect, or my Disciple, let him do this or that; leaving unto every one the Liberty of chusing what is Good or Evil for him, without any violent Forwardness or Constraint.

§. 121. Nor was there any other Motive that made him give his Laws and Commandments to Men, but only the Love that he had for them. When he saw they were become so mighty Lovers of themselves, he counsels them to *deny themselves, and take up the Cross, and follow him*: Which is indeed a pleasant Thing in it self; there being nothing more hard and difficult, than to satisfie one's Self-love, which is insatiably greedy, and can never have enough. So that he who denies himself has much more Satisfaction, than he that follows the Inclinations of corrupt Nature. And he that cheerfully takes up his Cross to follow Christ, has more Quiet and Peace of Conscience, than he who grieves at the Sufferings and Crosses that accidentally happen to him; inasmuch as Patience sweetens all sorts of Evils. Wherefore Jesus Christ might very well say, *That his Yoke is easie, and his Burthen light*, seeing the Yokes of the World and the Flesh are much more burthensome than the Evangelical Doctrine, which recommends all Things that are good even to Nature it self, and profitable also unto Life Eternal.

§. 122. This Doctrine recommends unto us (r) voluntary Poverty, (s) perpetual Chastity, and (t) entire Obedience. These are the Three Evangelical Counsels, which those that forsake the World, that they may be Christ's Disciples, do all profess; and though these Vows and Promises are not always well observed, yet are they nevertheless essential to the truly Christian Life; inasmuch as none are true Christians, but only those that observe the true Evangelical Doctrine, which Jesus Christ has taught them by Words and Deeds. For since Sin enter'd into the World, never any Person could be saved, but such as have essentially practised this Evangelical Doctrine. I say, *Essentially*, or as to the Essence; because there be many saved that have not had any Knowledge of

(q) *Matth.* xxiv. 16, & 24. xiv. 21. (r) *Matth.* v. 3. *Luke* xiv. 33. (s) *Matth.* v. 8. & xix. 12. (t) *Matth.* xvi. 24. & xviii. 3.

Christ;

Chriſt, or of his Doctrine, as to the Letter or Particulars of it. Nevertheleſs, they ought to have practiſed Poverty of Spirit, by coveting none of this World's Goods, ſo as to ſet their Affections upon them; and have been obliged to live chaſtly, and not to give up their Hearts and Affections to the Pleaſures of the Fleſh, nor to Exceſs in Eating or Drinking, or Sumptuouſneſs in Apparel and Furniture, which are all luxurious Impurities that diſpleaſe God, who would have the Heart and Friendſhip of Men all entire, not divided with others beſides himſelf; becauſe he had no other Deſign in creating Men after his own Likeneſs, but to the end they ſhould love their God with their whole Heart, ſuffering none of their Affections to fix out of him. My Meaning is not, that Man may not enjoy and taſte Things neceſſary for him; that he may not for Example eat or drink, or be cloathed, or beget Children: But that he ought to uſe all theſe things only ſo far as he finds neceſſary, without wedding his Heart to them; the Love of which ought to be reſerv'd entirely for God alone. All Men, whether under the Old or New Teſtament, that ever were ſaved before they had any Knowledge of the Evangelical Law, have been likewiſe obliged to an entire Obedience, this third Evangelical Counſel, as well as the two others: Seeing Jeſus Chriſt himſelf was obliged to practiſe this Vertue of compleat Obedience, when amidſt his ſtrongeſt Agonies in the Mount of Olives, he ſays, (u) *Not my Will, my Father, but thine be done*: And on another Occaſion, (x) *I am not come to do mine own Will, but the Will of him that ſent me*: And again, it is written, (y) *That he was obedient even to the Death of the Croſs*. Which is a ſufficient Evidence, that Jeſus Chriſt has taught us by his Example to obſerve theſe three Evangelical Counſels of *voluntary Poverty*, *perpetual Chaſtity*, and *entire Obedience*; and that none ever could have been, nor can be ſaved, to the End of the World, but only thoſe that have upon the Matter, and as to the Eſſence, practiſed the ſame Evangelical Counſels, let them be *Greeks*, *Jews*, *Pagans*, or others, of what Nation, Religion or Opinion ſoever they may be; inaſmuch as no Man can ever be ſaved, but only ſuch as are at their Death found rooted in *the Love of God*.

§. 123. And none can be poſſeſs'd of this Divine Love, but he that has voluntary Poverty, Chaſtity and Obedience rooted and grounded in his Soul; ſeeing the Love of God does always baniſh the Love of Riches, the Luſts of the

(u) *Matth.* xxvi. 39. (x) *John* vi. 38. (y) *Phil.* ii. 8.

Fleſh,

Fleſh, and the Love of one's own Will and Inclinations. For the Man that has the true Love of God, has no more Deſires after this World's Riches, which are a Burthen unto him, and of which he takes only his ſimple Neceſſaries. He is yet leſs delighted in carnal Loves, to which he has an Averſion. He who is poſſeſs'd with the true Love of his God; is unwilling either to do or undertake any thing of his own Will or Motion, which he ever ſuſpects and diſtruſts even in its beſt Actions. He is univerſally reſigned to the Will of God, and obeys him without Reſerve in all things, both Temporal and Spiritual, of the leaſt as well as of the greateſt Importance; knowing that the Scripture ſays, (z) *Be ye faithful in that which is little, and I will ſet you over much.* Thus the Perſon that loves God faithfully, always pays an entire Obedience to him he loves: So as though he cannot particularize theſe Evangelical Counſels, or has never heard of them, yet does he nevertheleſs faithfully obſerve them, feeling within his Soul an Averſion to Fleſhly Pleaſures, and to the Deſires of this World's Riches; becauſe he is always contented with what he poſſeſſes, without deſiring more; and being moreover afraid to follow his own Will, knowing it to be corrupt and evil, and that God's Will alone is good; which therefore the faithful Soul reſolves to obey only.

§. 124. And this is the State of a true Chriſtian, or of one that's in the true Way of Salvation, whether he be *Jew*, or *Chriſtian*, or *Heathen*, he can never be ſaved, if at his Death he be not found in the Love of his God; this being the End of his Creation, which unleſs he have attain'd to, he can't be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven. This was the Reaſon why Jeſus Chriſt demanded three times of St. *Peter*, ſaying, *Peter, loveſt thou me?* Repeating the ſame Queſtion, to give *Peter* Occaſion to examine himſelf, whether he loved God truly. For Chriſt knew very well that *Peter* loved him; but would give him to underſtand that it was his Duty to make ſtrict Scrutiny into his own Soul, to know if the Love of God were eſtabliſh'd in it, before he undertook the Charge of Chriſt's Church, which was committed unto him; becauſe in this Divine Love Eternal Life doth conſiſt: Which St. *Paul* likewiſe confirms, ſaying, (b) *Though ye had the Gift of Prophecy, and could work Miracles, yea, had Faith ſtrong enough to remove Mountains, ye have nothing without Charity,* which is the *Love of God.* And to ſhew that good Works

(z) *Matth.* xxv. 21. (a) *John* xxi. 15, 17. (b) 1 *Cor.* xiii. 2, *&c.*

are

are only as Accidents neceſſary to Salvation, this ſame Apoſtle adds, *That though ye ſhould give all your Goods to feed the Poor, yea, your Bodies to be burnt, all this ſhould profit you nothing without Charity,* which is the Love of God. This being once preſuppoſed upon the Credit of the infallible Truth of God, who can doubt but theſe new Caſuiſts are mightily deceived, who promiſe Salvation to Men living in continual Sin, and dying without the Love of God! Who promiſe Salvation, I ſay, to Sinners that are obſtinate in their Sins, as if Chriſt's Merits could be transfuſed as it were by a Charm into wicked Souls, fill'd with Self-love, without Converſion, and without Charity, or the Love of God; though this People are unwilling to perform their Penitence, according to what God has appointed, and Jeſus Chriſt came to preach and perſwade them. Don't ye ſee, my Children, that now is the Time foretold by the Propher, when theſe Guides of Souls, (c) *Lay Pillows under the Arms of impenitent Sinners,* and lead them inſenſibly to Deſtruction, with pious Words and holy Pretences of *relying upon the Merits of Chriſt Jeſus, and attributing to him the Merits of their Salvation,* though theſe Words are falſe, and thoſe holy Pretences hypocritical, ſuch as cannot abide the Judgment of God, who will utterly reject theſe fine Words of *confiding in the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt*; and that *Honour* which they ſay they do unto Chriſt, by aſcribing unto him the Honour of their Salvation; which are as ſo much Dung, of which God pronounces by his Prophet, (d) *I will throw the Dung of your Solemnities into your Faces.* It is of ſuch like pious Pretexts that the Prophet ſpeaks, calling them *Solemnities.* For what can there be more ſolemn, than to aſcribe Mens Salvation to the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt? This has a great Appearance of Piety, tho' in effect it is nothing but Deceit and Lyes.

§. 125. This is what ye, my Children, may ſee, if ye do but conſider, by the Help of your natural Spirit only, the Foundation of God's Deſigns in creating Man, that it was that he might make a Creature in his own Likeneſs, with this only Aim, to make himſelf be beloved of that Creature; and that ſo long as Man is out of this *Divine Love,* he claſhes with the Deſigns of God, and makes himſelf his Enemy, and cannot be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven, but is loſt for ever, if he dies out of this *Love.* And however theſe Caſuiſts may wreſt and pervert the Scriptures, yet they can-

(c) *Ezek.* xiii, 18, 20. (d) *Malach.* ii. 3.

not raze out that Paſſage, where God ſaid unto *Adam*, (e) *In the Sweat of thy Face ſhalt thou eat thy Bread*: Nor that other Paſſage in the New Teſtament, where Jeſus Chriſt ſays, (f) *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all periſh*; excluding neither Rich nor Poor, but ſaying *All*; pronouncing an abſolute Sentence of Condemnation againſt all thoſe that will not repent. How then can the ſame Jeſus Chriſt by his Merits ſave the Impenitent, who will not put off the Robe of the Old *Adam*, which is this Corruption of Sin, wherein they reſolve to continue, living without any Regard to God's Law or the Goſpel; believing that even in this Negligence they ſhall be ſav'd by the Merits of Chriſt, altho' they know that Chriſt himſelf, his Apoſtles and Diſciples, have all embraced Penitence, as the Way to Life Eternal? Theſe Criminals would have it without Suffering, and together with the Pleaſures of this mortal Life, into which they are ſent, for no other End, but that therein they might accompliſh their Penitence; not that they might live in it as in a Paradiſe of Delights, out of which Man was baniſh'd for his Sins, never more to be admitted into it again, till after he has done Penance for them. I would willingly know of thoſe Gloſſers, how they can perſwade Men to hope for Salvation, without performing Penitence, ſeeing they alſo ſay, that all Men periſhed in *Adam*, and read in the Scriptures, that God did not pardon *Adam*'s Sin, but on Condition that he ſhould do Penance for it; for the Text ſays expreſly, that *he ſhall get his Bread in the Sweat of his Face*. And we do not ſee that this Divine Appointment concerning Penance for Sin has been at all reſcinded; and therefore it ought to be obſerv'd and put in Practice by all Men to the End of the World. This cannot be called in Queſtion, ſeeing God is unchangeable in all his Decrees.

§. 126. If it be here objected, That ſince this Sentence was pronounced, Jeſus Chriſt became a mortal Man, and that by his Sufferings he did merit for Men: I will ſay, that Chriſt was more in a Condition to merit Mens Salvation with his Father, before he cloathed himſelf with our Mortality, than after he took it upon him, he being more acceptable in his glorious Eſtate, than in that miſerable one wherein he appear'd when cover'd with our Mortality. As one that is cloath'd in a rich and ſumptuous Habit, may with greater Decency and Aſſurance preſent his Petition to a King, than if he were cover'd only with the Rags and Tatters of a Beggar: ſo had Jeſus Chriſt a nearer Acceſs to his Father for pro-

(e) *Gen.* iii. 19. (f) *Luke* xiii. 3, 5.

curing

curing Mens Salvation, and obtaining a Pardon without Penitence, when he was in his State of Glory, wherein God took his Delights with him, than afterwards when he was cloathed with our Mortality, and cover'd with the Robe of his Enemies, that were corrupted with the Leproſie of Sin. There's no probability that Chriſt's Power ſhould have then been greater with his Eternal Father for procuring Men their Salvation, without obliging them to do Penance, than it was when he was yet in his Eſtate of Glory, converſing Face to Face with his heavenly Father. And, ſuppoſing Jeſus Chriſt had procur'd this Pardon, or this Salvation for Men, without their being oblig'd to Penitence, then *Adam* and the Apoſtles had a better Right to thoſe Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, than any other men beſides, who continually encreas'd, and added to their Sins, eating every Day, yea, every Hour and Moment of their Life, of the forbidden Fruit, contrary to the Commandment of God. So that *Adam* was much more holy than all other Men, that he might reap the Fruits of the Merits of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, without being oblig'd to ſo long a Penance, as he was through ſo great a Number of Years, during his whole Life, mourning continually for his Sin, never ſo much as laughing, or taking pleaſure in any thing of this World. And Chriſt's own Apoſtles and Diſciples, had not they a better Title to his Merits, without doing Penance for themſelves, than all the other Men in the World, as having followed Chriſt, and renounced the World, that they might be his faithful Diſciples? Theſe were the Perſons moſt proper to apply the Sufferings of Jeſus Chriſt to themſelves, of which they had themſelves been Eye-witneſſes, and Companions of his Miſeries; and yet from the Acts of the Apoſtles, and many places of the New Teſtament, we ſee how much they ſuffered, and what Penitence they went through, according to what Jeſus Chriſt himſelf had foretold them, That they ſhould be (g) *perſecuted or betrayed, led before Judges, be evil entreated, and put to death for his Names-ſake*; promiſing them, that (h) *in Patience they ſhould poſſeſs their Souls.*

§ 127. It might well be made a Queſtion, Whether the Apoſtles and Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt had not as much Skill to apply his Merits to themſelves, as thoſe new Doctors; who muſt needs eſteem all the Vertues of the Primitive Chriſtians, who parted with all their Eaſe and Conveniencies, for a Life of Labour, and Poverty, and Sufferings, as mere Folly? If it had been true, that Chriſt had merited all for

(g) *Luke* xxi. 12. (h) *Luke* xxi. 19.

them, to what purpoſe then ſo much ſuperfluous Penitence? Ought not they to have liv'd at their Eaſe, and relied upon the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, as our modern Chriſtians do, who being unwilling to do Penance, do yet expect their Salvation thro' the Merits of Chriſt, as if they were more conſiderable Perſons than the Apoſtles and Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, who lived all according to the Apoſtles Advice (*k*), *working out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling?* For none ſince *Adam's* Sin have ever been ſaved by any other means than that of Penitence. Endeavour, my Children, to diſcover the Impoſture of theſe new Guides, who lead Men to Paradiſe by the way of Hell. Reject thoſe Maxims, as coming from the Devil for Man's Deſtruction; ſeeing it is falſe, That Chriſt came to redeem Men by his Sufferings, without their being willing to imitate him; and ſeeing he cloath'd himſelf with our Mortality; only that he might come and ſhew us by his own Example, how we might recover the Love of God, without which there's no Hope of Salvation. And whereas Men had by many different kinds of means loſt this Love of God, they wanted ſome powerful means to make them know their Sins, and ſhew them how they ought to amend them, that they might recover the Favour and Love of God. And nothing being more powerful than a living Example that we ſee before our Eyes, Jeſus Chriſt was willing to take up the Form of a Sinner, that he might ſhew us by his own Example how a Sinner ought to demean himſelf in every reſpect, that he may attain eternal Salvation. For had it not been for this Example, Man could never have found the way to return to the Love of God, from which he had wandred ſo widely, that it ſeem'd to him utterly irrecoverable: Men had liv'd ſo long in the Neglect and Oblivion of God, as none of them were any more mindful of him, or of any thing that was eternal. And as all Men in general had been loſt by the Sin of *Adam*, ſo were they all in like manner ruin'd a ſecond time by their own Sins.

§. 128. And this Malady was incurable, if Jeſus Chriſt had not cloath'd himſelf with our Mortality. For had he deſcended among Men in his glorious Body, as he had formerly convers'd with *Adam*, 'tis probable Men would have taken him for a Phantome, and would not have hearkned unto him. Moreover, Words are not ſo effectual as Works, to overcome a Heart that is hardned. Men wanted to ſee and feel the things which they ought to practiſe; the Attention of

(*k*) *Phil.* ii. 12.

their

their Spirits being only to Earthly things, they ſought not after Things eternal. So deſperate a Diſeaſe requir'd a moſt powerful Remedy, or otherwiſe all ſhould have periſh'd eternally. Therefore Jeſus Chriſt compaſſionating their Caſe, was mov'd with a Spirit of Charity towards them: for he had a tender Love for Men, his natural Brethren, and knew that Sin had made them ſo ſtupid and ignorant, as that they knew not the Miſery into which they were fallen; and much leſs the means by which they might recover themſelves, not having ſo much as a Deſire to do it; ſo inſenſible were they of their own Damnation, that they had not ſo much as a Thought of Eternal Things, being wholly unmindful of God's Deſign in creating them; which was no other, but that they might love their God, and that he might *delight himſelf with the Children of Men*, as the Scripture ſpeaks concerning Jeſus Chriſt, who is the only true Son of Man: God the Father ſays, (*h*) *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleaſed.*

§. 129. Such ſhould all Men in general, and every one of them in particular have been, if they had not ſinned in *Adam*, nor afterwards of their own Free-will, ſeeing they were all the Children of God by Grace and Adoption: They had been all little Gods, depending on the Supreme One. They had alſo been (as Jeſus Chriſt) all truly Sons of Men, if *Adam* had produc'd them whilſt he was yet innocent and perfect as God had created him, except any of them had willingly, departed from their Duty to God, and ſet their Love which was due to him alone, upon ſome other thing beſides him; as they were all free to do, after they had come to the Uſe of their Reaſon, which was given them immediately upon their Birth, as ſoon as they came into the World. For perfect Men without Sin, would not have been liable to the Infirmities of Childhood, nor ſtood in need of the Aſſiſtance of others. Such Children of Men ſhould not have wanted to be nurs'd, and clean'd, and ſwaddled, nor to have their Meat and Drink put in their Mouths; ſeeing of themſelves they could have taken their Neceſſaries, and ſhortly have come to the Fulneſs of the Stature of perfect Men, as did Jeſus Chriſt, who proceeding from *Adam*, wanted none to feed, or clean, or cheriſh him. He was alone the Firſt-born of all the Creatures, none of which had generated their like before the Birth of Jeſus Chriſt: wherefore the Scripture ſays truly of him, that he is (*i*) *The Firſt-born of every Creature.*

(h) *Matth.* iij. 7. (i) *Coloſſ.* i. 15.

§. 130. But thoſe who read this Scripture, underſtand it not, becauſe they give more way to their corrupt Imaginations, than to the Truth of the thing that they read. Thus are many groſly impos'd on, thinking they underſtand the Scriptures, when they take them in the quite contrary Senſe, and herewith believing themſelves wiſe in the midſt of their fooliſh Conceptions. This makes them ſlow to underſtand the Truths of the Scripture; tho' they are clear, and ſimple, and plain, ſo as a Child might eaſily underſtand them, that would read them in a Dove-like Simplicity. But theſe great Men, who think themſelves wiſe, are really blind as to the underſtanding of the holy Scriptures; becauſe (k) *Fleſh and Blood underſtand not that which belongeth to the Spirit of God*: And to cover their Ignorance, they ſay, The Scriptures are hard to be underſtood; as if they were high and hidden Myſteries, out of the Reach of human Capacity: tho' the Scriptures were only deſign'd for Mens underſtanding, and the Goſpel is written for the Inſtruction of the Simple, and not for proud Philoſophers, who will be ſcanning the Evangelical Simplicity by their ſubtil Reaſonings, without underſtanding any thing of the true Senſe. It is for this that Jeſus Chriſt thank'd his Father, ſaying (l), *I thank thee, O Father, that thou haſt conceal'd theſe things from the Great and Wiſe Men of this World, and haſt reveal'd them unto Babes: Even ſo, Father, becauſe ſuch was thy good Pleaſure.* All the Miſery of thoſe wiſe Men of the World cometh of this, that they are not in a Diſpoſition to practiſe what they read in the Scriptures. They are ſatisfy'd if they can collect any fine Notions out of them, that they may glory in their Knowledge; whereas they ought to be aſham'd of their Ignorance, and condemn their Slowneſs and Backwardneſs to live an Evangelical Life, inaſmuch as none can underſtand the Goſpel better than he who puts it in Practice. It is not much Study and Subtilty of Wit or Spirit that's required in them for diſcovering the higheſt, and moſt hidden Divine Myſteries, but only a perfect Humility of Heart; without which, they may toil and ſtudy long enough before they comprehend the Wiſdom of the Holy Spirit; to the obtaining of which, the Learning of the Schools is a great Obſtruction. Hence it is that ſo few underſtand the Holy Scriptures; namely, becauſe they would be over-wiſe in (m) *the Letter which killeth*; never ſeeking after *the Spirit which giveth Life*.

(k) 1 *Cor.* ii. 14. (l) *Matth.* xi. 25, 26. (m) 2 *Cor.* iii. 6.

§. 131.

§. 131. I know, my Children, that God has revealed many things, and many high divine Myſteries unto me, which it is not abſolutely neceſſary for you to know, in order to your Salvation: Such as the glorious State in which Man was creted; the Birth of Chriſt (coming from *Adam*) as (*n*) *the Firſt-born of every Creature*: That all God's Works ſhall endure for ever, and ſuch like other Myſteries; ſeeing they are hidden Secrets, which our Forefathers knew nothing of, tho' ſo many holy Prophets, and Patriarchs, and other particular Perſons, have been ſaved without the Knowledge of all theſe things; and God was not pleas'd to reveal them until the latter Ages, wherein we now live. My meaning, I ſay, is not at all, that ye ought to underſtand all theſe Particulars, and ſecret Myſteries: If ye have any difficulty to believe them, ye may ſafely ſuperſede them, until ſuch time as God ſhall give you the Knowledge of them.

§. 132. But ſee that ye believe, and lay to Heart theſe three Fundamental Points of your Salvation; namely, That *God created Man for no other end, but only to be loved by him; deſigning himſelf to take his Delights with Man.* 2ly, *That none ever has been, nor ever will be ſaved to the end of the World, whoſe Soul is not at Death endued with the Love of God.* The 3d is, *That no Man can recover the Love of God, which was loſt by Sin, but only he that does ſubſtantially practiſe the Evangelical Counſels.* Theſe three things are neceſſary for your Salvation; which unleſs ye obſerve, ye cannot attain to a bleſſed Immortality. Be not deceived, nor amuſed by the frivolous Diſcourſes of Men, who promiſe Salvation through the imaginary Application of the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt; for theſe ſhall never be apply'd to impenitent Sinners, nor to ſuch as die out of the Love of God.

§. 133. Believe theſe Eternal Truths, tho' ye ſhould queſtion all the other things that I have ſaid unto you; when ye perceive in your own Conſciences, that theſe high and divine Myſteries, or particular Lights, bring you no Spiritual Advantage, nor promote the *Love of God* in your Souls. As for my ſelf, I know that all thoſe Wonders have planted in my Soul a Contempt of all earthly things, and have encreaſed in me the Love of God, and the Deſire of things that are Eternal. Thoſe that feel ſuch Effects in their Souls, through the Knowledge of ſo many hidden Treaſures, do well to believe them, and to pry ſtill further into them; but they who are nothing profited by theſe particular Lights, may

(n) *Col.* i. 15.

paſs them by, or forget them, without reaſoning in their own Minds, whether theſe things be really true, or no; leaving the Judgment of them unto God alone; For it would be to no purpoſe to enquire of ignorant Men if theſe Myſteries are true; they are not capable (*o*) to make any Judgment of them, as not knowing any thing but what they have found in their Books, or learn'd in their Schools. But do ye, my Children, pray unto God with Humility of Heart, that he may give you ſome Rays of his Divine Light, if it be proper for your Salvation; and ſtudy the Holy Scriptures with Deliberation; for they teſtifie of theſe Truths, tho' Men do not diſcover them by the Scriptures, becauſe their Hearts are too much wedded to the Earth, to be able to comprehend any thing in Divine Matters. And I might well ſay unto the Men of this Age, as Chriſt ſaid to thoſe of his (*p*), *Ye read the Scriptures, and they teſtifie of me*: But (*q*) *ye neither underſtand me, nor the Scriptures.* And altho' the underſtanding of theſe Divine Myſteries be not directly neceſſary to Salvation, yet it is however indirectly ſo; for as much as if one had no Knowledge of theſe Divine Things, he could not well deſpiſe the Temporal, and deny himſelf, that he might follow Jeſus Chriſt; becauſe all theſe things are repugnant to Man's corrupt Nature, which is no better than a Beaſt, without the Knowledge of Things that are Divine and Eternal. For how can one, who has only natural Sentiments, be ſuppoſed to deſpiſe the good things of this Life, which he ſees, and touches, and taſtes, as beautiful, and good, and delightful, and ſet his Heart upon Divine and Eternal Things, which he neither ſeeth, nor comprehendeth? This would be impoſſible to Man's Nature, which loveth always what it thinketh to be beautiful and good, chuſing theſe things, as much as poſſible, taking always that which is fineſt and beſt for its own uſe; and all this from a natural Inſtinct, becauſe God made him the Sovereign Lord of all that was beautiful and good, ſeeing all theſe beautiful and good things were created for Man's uſe, and for no other End whatſoever. This is the Reaſon that Man has ſtill a natural Inclination to that which is beautiful and good, which did properly belong to him, if he had continued in God's Favour without Sin. This is the Reaſon alſo, why we ſee in all Men that live according to their natural Motions, a forwardneſs to chuſe the fineſt and beſt of things that they can have for their uſe; as the fineſt and moſt convenient Houſes and Furniture, the beſt and

(*o*) 1 *Cor.* iis 14. (*p*) *John* v. 39. (*q*) *John* iii, 12.

moſt

moſt delicious Fare, the gayeſt Cloaths, and the fineſt Pictures; and when Fruit and other Delicacies are ſet before them, the natural Perſon has his Eye continually upon that which is beſt and moſt agreeable. This is what the very Beaſts do alſo: For a Horſe, or Cow, feeding in a Meadow, will ſeek out the beſt Graſs, and not feed upon the worſt, but with regret or by conſtraint, or when they cannot find that which is better; ſo natural is it to ſeek always for that which appears to be Beautiful and Good. Suppoſing this to be true, as moſt certainly it is, how then can Man chuſe Divine and Supernatural Things, before he knows their Beauty and Goodneſs? And how can he be able to deſpiſe all the Goodneſs and Beauties of the Things of this Life, that he may love things of which he comprehends or knows nothing?

§. 135. Theſe Arguments, my Children, ought to awaken in you ſome care, if not anxiety, for informing your ſelves ſtill more and more of the things that are Divine and Eternal; ſeeing this alone is capable to bring you back to the Love of God, and make you embrace an Evangelical Life, deſpiſing this World and its Vanities: For without the Love of Celeſtial and Eternal Objects you would find it very painful to imitate Jeſus Chriſt, who both in Word and Deed taught ſuch a way of Living, as is utterly repugnant to corrupt Nature: For this reaſon ye cannot be his Diſciples, until ſuch time as ye have a love to Things that are Eternal; and theſe ye cannot love except ye know them.

§. 136. Hence it is that ſome Ignorant Perſons have taken occaſion to ſay, that we cannot keep the Goſpel Law, nor the Law of God; which is blaſpheming againſt this Divine Majeſty, who has given Men his Commandments and his Evangelical Laws, as ſpecial (*r*) Favours, ſhewing them the means whereby they may be ſaved by returning to the Love of God, which is the end for which Man was created, *viz.* to Love God only: For God's Laws are not grievous, but they are Lights for diſcovering Sin, and means for correcting it. But thoſe Ignorant Men in the blindneſs of their Spirits ſay, that *it is impoſſible to keep God's Laws*, becauſe having a reſpect only to their corrupt Nature, they have reaſon to judge this an impoſſibility. (*u*) But if they had any knowledge of Eternal Good Things, they would then make a right judgment that God's Laws are good; yea, eaſy and delightful, which Jeſus Chriſt confirmeth, ſaying, (*x*) *Take my Yoke upon you, for it is eaſy, and my burthen is light.*

(r) *Pſal.* cxix. 29. (s) 1 *John* v. 3. (t) *Pſal* xix. 9, and 119, 105. (u) *Rom.* viii. 3, and 7. (x) *Mat.* xi. 29.

For

§. 137. For in Truth, there is nothing better or more valuable than true Vertue, which even with reſpect to this preſent Life, is Beautiful, and Good, and Rich, and Honourable beyond any other thing: For who can be happier in this World than he that is endued with ſolid Vertue? He is peaceable and contented, has a quiet Conſcience, and a good report likewiſe among Men: Foraſmuch as keeping all his Vicious Paſſions in ſubjection, he will never give occaſion to any Perſon to be angry with him; not being himſelf angry nor proud, but eaſy and agreeable, through his humility and goodneſs; he is alſo honourable upon the account of Modeſty, Juſtice and Truth: For true Vertue has all theſe fine qualities always in perfection, being in it ſelf juſt and true, modeſt and continent. Wherefore I reckon the truly Vertuous Perſon, the moſt happy Creature in this World, yea, the richeſt alſo, becauſe having true Vertue, he has all that he deſires in this World, ſeeing he neither ſeeks nor deſires but what is ſimply neceſſary, which he will always have in abundance, ſo long as he purſues only what is Eternal; having learn'd from the Divine Wiſdom, that it is a burthen to poſſeſs earthly Good Things more than what is ſimply neceſſary: And therefore he that is contented is truly *Rich*, and enjoys more than if he poſſeſs'd all this World's Riches himſelf alone. He is *Honourable* beſides, foraſmuch as the Vertuous Man is a Child of God, and Spouſe of the Holy Spirit, which are Titles more elevated than we can imagine, in compariſon of which, all earthly Pre-eminence and Grandeur is low, abject, and ſervile; ſeeing he that ſerves God is a King, and the World's Servant is a Slave; and the greater and more honourable any Perſon is, the more cares and uneaſineſs hang about him. So as to be a Spouſe of the Holy Spirit through true Virtue, is more than to be King or Emperor of the whole World.

§. 138. Such are the Privileges, the Advantages, the Riches and Honours which true Vertue brings along with it even in this Life, to the Perſon that poſſeſſeth it. And what then can we imagine will be the Felicity which ſuch Perſons will enjoy to all Eternity being with their God, whom they loved ſo much in this World, and whom they will love without compariſon ſtill more in Eternity, and with a much more perfect and accompliſh'd love? becauſe they will then know him better in all his Perfections. I am not able to enlarge my ſelf upon this Eternal Felicity. I ſhould die of Joy, my corruption being incapable to penetrate into it; it is enough that the Goodneſs of God has given me ſome fore-taſt of this Eternal Bliſs by inward views, and ſecret notices of the Happy and Glori-

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ous State wherein Man was Created, how Beautiful, how Good, how Powerful, Wiſe, and Perfect he was at his Creation! As a little God, reigning over all the inferiour Creatures, which were created only (y) for Man's uſe and pleaſure, and for no other end. As Man was made to Love his God, ſo were all the terreſtrial Creatures created for the Service of Man: Yea, God hath appointed (z) the Angels themſelves to ſerve Man, becauſe of Man's noble Extract and Creation, and that he was made in the likeneſs of God, to the end that God might be delighted in him. God made Man a more perfect Creature than the Angels, who were his Courtiers, whereas Man was created the Spouſe of God, capable of converſing more familiarly with him. Wherefore ſays the Scripture, ſpeaking of God, (a) *He hath given his Angels charge over them to keep them in all their ways, leaſt they daſh their Foot againſt a Stone.* And do not all theſe ineſtimable Favours which God has vouchſafed unto Men, require Reſentments of the greateſt Love towards ſuch a Benefactor?

§. 139. Is it not an inſupportable Ingratitude for Man to withdraw his Affections from God, and ſet himſelf to love things ſo mean and baſe as are all the Pleaſures of corrupt Nature, which enclines us to Love divers Objects, that are altogether unworthy of our Love. To ſee ſo noble a Creature (as Man was Created) delighting in things ſo vile and low, as are the Pleaſures of the Fleſh, or in eating and drinking corruptible Things, which are no ſooner ſwallowed down, than they are turned into rottenneſs and ſtink! To ſee Men place all their utmoſt Affections in Gold or Silver, thoſe hard and heavy Metals, which if thrown with a good will at his Head, would be capable to kill him; ſo far are they from having any affinity to Man's Nature, having neither Life nor Motion, nor Form reſembling Man; For Gold and Silver are only Maſſes of Concocted Earth, which yield not any Fruit neceſſary unto Men, nor are they valuable in any thing but the Price that his corrupted Fancy has ſet upon them: For ſetting this aſide, there is not any other thing valuable in Silver, nor Beautiful, nor Good in its Nature. And notwithſtanding of this, we ſee almoſt all Men ceaſe to Love their God, for the eſteem and love of Money. They give up themſelves Slaves and Idolaters to this Mammon, neither minding, nor labouring after any other thing but how they may get and preſerve it; ſo entirely are their Affections and Hearts wedded unto it. Others we ſee withdraw their Hearts from God, to beſtow

(y) *Pſal.* xiii. 7, &c. (z) *Heb.* i. 14. (a) *Pſal.* xci. 11, 12.

them

them in the Love of Beautiful Creatures, in Rich Furniture, Fine Cloaths, in Pomp, Equipage and Grandeur, and the like vain and tranſient Objects, which create Men much care and anxiety, and are often accompanied with uneaſineſs and vexations, tho' Men at the ſame time are ſo blind and ſtupid as to faſten their Affections upon theſe Vanities, notwithſtanding the trouble and vexation that attends them: Men love them nevertheleſs to the prejudice of the Love which in juſtice they owe to their God.

§. 140. Such is the miſerable State to which Man is reduced by Sin, by which he has deprived himſelf of all the Beauty, Goodneſs, Wiſdom and Power, wherewith God endued him at his Creation: For before Sin he was Beauty it ſelf, had his Body bright and agile, nimble and luminous; he had a penetrating Spirit, a holy Will, a perfect Underſtanding of every thing, fill'd with all Joy and Contentment; whereas Sin has made him loathſome, and heavy, and dark, and dull, and ignorant, and ſlow; it has deprav'd his Will, and left him an erring and entangled Underſtanding. Sin has made Man ſullen and diſſatisfied; ſo that he wants continual Diverſion to charm his Miſery, and divert his Melancholy; while the Man living according to the Motions of his corrupt Nature, thinks himſelf happy amidſt all his Miſeries; Sin has ſo ſtupified his Soul, as it has made him inſenſible of his true Happineſs or Miſery: For we ſee this blind Creature pleaſing himſelf in his Blindneſs and Miſeries, deſpiſing the Felicities that are prepar'd for him in Eternity, after he is rais'd up and reſtor'd unto the State in which God at firſt created him.

§. 141. For this Reſurrection ſhall not be ſuch as is commonly underſtood, that this mortal Body and this Corruption ſhall, after it is dead, be reſtored unto Life again; ſeeing nothing but what God has made ſhall be Eternal. Now this mortal Body and this Corruption was not made by God; it was taken out of the Duſt, (*b*) and ſhall again be reduc'd into Duſt, never to revive any more after Death: But that glorious Body, which God hath created, ſhall be rais'd up again, and live for ever, ſeeing (*c*) none of God's Works ſhall ever periſh; whatever God hath created ſhall have an Eternal Duration; but all that which Sin hath introduced upon God's Works ſhall periſh; nothing of this kind ſhall remain for the Bleſſed. All theſe curſed Effects and Products of Sin ſhall be

(b) *Eccleſ.* xii. 9. (c) *Pſal.* cxix. 90, 91.

the

the Portion ‡ of the Damned, as being the Work of their Hands, whose internal Bodies shall never end, no more than those of the Blessed; because God has created the Wicked as well as the Good, as to their internal Bodies, in which they shall live Eternally; whether their Lives have been good or bad, every one shall have the Portion that they have chosen in this World.

§. 142. I do not say, that this internal Body shall rise again, seeing it could not die. God has not made Death; He created Man immortal and perfect, as is above express'd: But Sin entring, and breaking in upon the Work of God, spread Corruption and Death over this internal Body, which every Man bears about in him under this mortal Flesh, which, like a Leprosie in a sound Body, renders it infirm, frail and mortal, subject to all sorts of Diseases and Miseries: So that it were not to be wish'd that this Corruption, which covers our internal Bodies, should rise again, but rather that it should return to the Nothing out of which it was taken, as for certain it will when the internal Body is separated from the mortal Body. Then this mortal Body returns unto Dust, as we see in the Burying-places of Bodies that have been long dead, of which nothing finally remains, but a few Ashes, which the Wind blows away and scatters through the Air. But the internal Body returns in its Integrity, and being deliver'd from this Corruption, remains free, and beautiful, and agile, and subtile, and luminous, as God at first created it. When one has subdued his corrupt Nature in this Life, and is come back to the Love of his God, he returns to him from whom he proceeded to love him Eternally, and to delight for ever in his God.

§. 143. But such as have in this World lov'd, and flatter'd, and humor'd their Corruption, esteem'd their mortal Flesh, and delighted in the Pleasures of this Life, instead of God, after they are deliver'd from their mortal Body, shall in their internal Bodies be oppress'd with all the Evils which Sin has introduced into Nature, and which they in Justice ought to bear (*d*) Eternally, without Intermission or Abatement; since they are Eternal, and have offended an Eternal God, their Punishment must needs also be Eternal. This is what Men call *Hell*. Yet we are not to understand this so, as if in Hell there were material Fire, like to what we see and feel; because all the gross Materiality that Sin brought into Nature

‡ *Prov.* i. 31. (h) *Rev.* xiv. 10, 11.

(*e*) shall

(e) ſhall periſh, and nothing ſhall remain for Man after Death, but Spiritual Evils, that have been intruded into Nature by Sin, and ſhall then cleave to the internal Bodies of the Damn'd, to be their Eternal Torment, which they have merited, as having offended an Eternal God. And good Reaſon there is that they ſhould bear and ſmart under the Evils of the Works of their own Hands, and be made to feel the Burning and Smoak of the Fire, which Sin introduced into that Element; the Storms of the Water, the Tempeſts of the Winds, the Pricking of the Thorns of the Earth; which are all the Creatures of Sin, and will be an Eternal Puniſhment for it, as all the other Corruptions that Sin has brought into Nature will likewiſe prove, as the Biting of Dogs, the Rage of Lions, the Poiſon of venomous Beaſts, the Diſeaſes of Men; in a Word, all the Evils that Sin has occaſion'd in Nature will be the Portion of the Damn'd, who ſhall bear them proportionably as they have ſinned more or leſs in this World; for as in Heaven there be (f) different Degrees of Glory, proportion'd to Mens Approaches to the Love of God in this World; ſo ſhall Men be tormented in Hell alſo, (g) according to the Number and Heinouſneſs of their Sins upon Earth.

§. 144. This, as I have ſomewhere already obſerved, is not ſo to be underſtood, as that our corruptible Fleſh were to feel theſe Evils, ſince it ſhall return to Aſhes, and nothing; it being no more but a Leproſie or Cruſt of Corruption, that has over-ſpread our internal Body: And when the Scripture ſays, (h) *That we ſhall be raiſed with this ſame Fleſh, and theſe very Bones*; the Meaning is not, with this ſame Corruption, but this ſame Body which God created; which being afterwards covered with this Leproſie of Corruption in all its Members, the Apoſtle could not expreſs our Riſing with the ſame Fleſh and the ſame Bones, otherwiſe than by pointing at his Fleſh and Bones; as we cannot ſpeak of the Nature of a Tree without pointing at the Bark of it. For had the Apoſtle meant, that our mortal Fleſh ought to riſe again, he would not have ſo paſſionately deſired to be delivered from it, ſaying, (i) *Who ſhall ſet me free from this mortal Body?* For to be delivered from it is not to wiſh that it may be raiſed up and live Eternally, or to hope to reign Eternally with it after its Reſurrection. So as the Holy Scriptures are ill underſtood, no Body has yet taken up the true Meaning of them.

(e) *Rom.* viii. 21. *Heb.* i. 11, 12. 2 *Pet.* iii. 10. (f) 1 *Cor.* xv. 41, 42. (g) *Matth.* xxii. 24. (h) 1 *Cor.* xv. 54. *Job* xix. 26, 27. (i) *Rom.* vii. 24.

§. 145.

§. 145. That Holy Spirit which leadeth into all Truth, muſt (*k*) teach and explain the Scriptures, otherwiſe, many things will remain in Darkneſs. And becauſe he teaches me many Divine Myſteries which Men have not hitherto heard or underſtood, they call me Heretick, as they ſaid of Jeſus Chriſt, that he came to deſtroy the Law of God, when he had brought the Divine Light of Truth into the World. My Children, give no Ear to the Diſcourſes of Men, which cannot ſave you, nor give you eternal Life. But believe Jeſus Chriſt, he will lead you into the Kingdom of Heaven. He is the only way that leadeth to Salvation. All other Ways that Men teach, beſides the Goſpel, are but croſs and crooked Paths, and will never bring us to a ſafe Harbour. There is but one Door, (*l*) which is *Jeſus Chriſt*. There is but one (*m*) narrow Way that leadeth to Salvation. If you are willing to enter into it, now is your Opportunity, ſince Jeſus Chriſt is willing to reſtore his *Goſpel-Spirit* upon the Earth, to gather his own People together into a Corner of the World, and to inſpect and govern them himſelf, to the End they may be his People, and he their God, according to what the (*n*) Prophet has foretold.

§. 146. But the Miſery is, that Men do not commit themſelves unto God's Government, chuſing to be governed by the Inclinations of corrupt Nature in doing Ill, rather than to do Good under the Conduct and Influence of the Holy Spirit. This is the miſerable Condition of almoſt the whole World; becauſe Men are not aware of the Wickedneſs of their Corruption, and think they have done well when they have done very ill. For Man needs only follow the Motions of corrupt Nature to bring him ſtraight to Hell; ſeeing (*o*) *We are born in Sin*, and (*p*) *Children of Wrath and Perdition*, we have good Ground to conclude, that for certain we muſt be damn'd, if in this Life we do not cruſh and overcome this corrupt Nature. 'Tis for this that Jeſus Chriſt ſays frequently in his Goſpel, (*q*) *Deny your ſelves*; and (*r*) *He that does not deny himſelf cannot be my Diſciple*. And when it is ſaid, that (*s*) *Our Life is a continual Warfare*. The Meaning is no other, but that we muſt always war againſt our corrupt Nature, not ſuffering it to rule, nor humoring its Motions in any thing, ſeeing they are always abſolutely evil, and never any good thing

(k) 1 *Cor.* ii. 10—14. (l) *Joh.* x. 9. (m) *Matth.* vii. 13, 14. (n) *Jer.* xxx. 18, 22. xxxi. 37, &c. (o) *Pſal.* xv. 7. (p) *Epheſ.* ii. 3. (q) *Matth.* xvi. 24. (r) *Luke* xiv. 33. (s) *Epheſ.* vi. 12. *Job* vii. 1.

can

can proceed from Corruption. Wherefore the Chriſtian's daily Exerciſe ought to be a continual Warring againſt his own Will and Inclinations, foraſmuch as otherwiſe he cannot attain to Salvation, being damned from his Birth.

§. 147. This is a Thing that few are apprehenſive of; and no Body teaches theſe Things in good Earneſt, becauſe they themſelves do not know them. They are willing to encourage Men in their Sins, perſwading one another, that God has created us thus; that he knows our Frailty, for which Jeſus Chriſt has given Satisfaction; and that he will ſave us by the Merits of his Son. This is the Peſtilence which breaks out all over Chriſtendom, and carries off even thoſe who think themſelves ſo ſafe and ſecure. For when Men are perſwaded that our mortal Body ſhall riſe again, and that God has created it as we ſee it, they will have Ground to ſet a Value upon it, as the Work of God, yea, to love and pamper it, as we ſee they do. And indeed if God regarded our Corruption, who would deny himſelf, or refuſe to give to his Will all its Deſires and Pleaſures? And who would forbear to delight himſelf in this World, if all theſe Sins of Pleaſures were to be accounted only as Infirmities that God will ſuffer? And who would perform Penitence, if Men were to be ſaved purely by the Merits of Chriſt Jeſus? For if this were the Caſe, the Apoſtles, Prophets and Martyrs, who have ſhed their Blood for the Kingdom of Heaven, and all the many holy Anchorets and Penitents, muſt needs be guilty of egregious Folly to undergo ſo great Pain and Labor in ſubduing their Corruption, if God were thus indulgent to Human Frailties, and would ſave Men meerly by their Application of the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt. Don't ye ſee, my Children and Chriſtian Brethren, that our Lot is fall'n in the laſt Days, when (*t*) the Abomination is ſet in holy Places, and many pretend to come in Chriſt's Name, and do by this means deceive many, even the Elect themſelves were it poſſible? For what Deluſion can be more ſubtle, than to teach Men that God created them, ſuch as they feel themſelves at preſent, in an infirm and miſerable Body, that was ſubject to Death? Might not one hence fairly conclude, that God has made many wretched and imperfect Works, that ſtand in need of a good Corrector? And if God has ſuch Regard to our Frailty, whence comes it that we muſt ſuffer ſo many Inconveniencies of Cold and Heat, and Hunger, and Thirſt, and Wearineſs, and ſo many ſorts of Maladies, both

(t) *Matth.* xxiv. 15. Be-

Bodily and Spiritual? God might eaſily exempt us from ſo many Evils, in Conſideration of our Frailty: For it would be cruel in him, if he were indulgent to our Frailties, to take Pleaſure in our Sufferings. And if God deſign'd to ſave all Men only by the Merits of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, why does he ſend them into this Valley of Tears to undergo and ſuffer ſo much? Ought not theſe holy Merits to reſcue us from Pain and Puniſhment, as well as from Guilt, conſidering they are infinite Merits? Why was *Adam* obliged to do 900 Years Penitence, after his Sin was pardon'd? Had God had Regard to his Frailty, why did he not then preſently reſtore him to the Place of his Delight, where he was before his Sin? Could God take Pleaſure in the Death of a Sinner? And no Man ſhall ever be better diſpos'd to partake of Jeſus Chriſt's Merits, than he, the Number of whoſe Sins was but ſmall; whereas all other Men commit them daily in great Number, ſeeing they eat continually of the Forbidden Fruit, which *Adam* probably eat but once. Wherefore Jeſus Chriſt's Merits ought rather to be applied to him than other Men, or thoſe that live now upon the Earth in Contempt of God, believing that he made our Bodies mortal, infirm and miſerable, ſuch as we now have them.'

§. 148. Which cannot poſſibly be true; for he being a perfect God, nothing that's imperfect can proceed from him. But Man being fal'n into Blindneſs by reaſon of his Sin, ſees not any thing farther than the Extent of his ſhort Sight, which is not able to penetrate through the Cruſt of our Mortality, to ſee this interior Body which God has created there, regarding only the Bark, and having no Perception of this glorious Body, which lies hidden under it, though it be there more lively and perfect than this mortal Body, which we ſee with our corrupt Eyes. Though they are not capable to ſee any other thing but Corruption, it does not therefore follow, that there is no other thing there, but what we ſee and perceive, there being a Thouſand Things in Nature that we neither ſee nor feel, and yet nevertheleſs we know by Experience that they are there; as in the Flint we ſee no Fire, we perceive no Heat, and can make no other Judgment of it, but that it is a cold, groſs, lumpiſh Body without Life; but by ſtriking upon it, we are convinced there is in it Fire, and Life, and Heat; for if theſe were not in it, they could not iſſue from it: ſo is it in the Load-ſtone alſo, the Vertue whereof cannot be diſcern'd by Sight or Touch, to which it appears to be a heavy Body, without Life or Vigor, though at the ſame time it has in it a Force to attract Iron, and turn it ſelf to the

North, though no Body touch it. The Plants and bulbous Roots of Flowers appear to be only dead Bodies, though they bear the fineſt Roſes and Flowers when they are ſet in the Ground; all theſe things muſt needs be within, ſeeing they iſſue forth in their Seaſon, though before that time we cannot ſee or judge of any ſuch thing with our Sight and corrupt Judgment. And becauſe we cannot ſee nor feel our internal Body, we believe we have no other but this mortal Body, which we ſee and touch with our corrupted Sight and Feeling, in which we are greatly deceived, ſeeing all that which we ſee of our Bodies, and conceive of our Spirits, is nothing but Corruption and Imperfection, which God did not create, but Sin introduced upon Nature, after that God had made it ſo compleat and perfect; which Man would be abundantly ſenſible of, had not Sin corrupted his Spirit as much as it has done his Body; God having made Man ſo intelligent, wiſe and penetrating, as he might ſee and underſtand all Natural, yea, and Divine Things; and he had this Wiſdom, that he might diſcover the Works of God, and penetrate into his Deſigns on Men; but Sin has made him ſo ſtupid, and groſs, and ignorant, that he does not comprehend even Things that are viſible and perceptible to his corrupt Nature. For thus Jeſus Chriſt complaineth, ſaying unto them, (u) *If I have told you Earthly Things, and you underſtand not; how ſhall ye underſtand if I tell you of Heavenly Things?* Whence it appears, that Man's Spirit has been as much, yea, much more corrupted by Sin, than his Body. Wherefore we are not to look for any Good from this corrupted Spirit, no more than from the Corruption of the Body, ſince neither the one nor the other can produce any thing but Sin and Miſeries, which draw Men into Eternal Woe.

§. 149. Wherefore, my Children, ye muſt not hope for Salvation, if you do not effectually deny your ſelves. Tho' you diſcourſe well of Vertue, forſake the World, profeſs to be Chriſtians, and outwardly perform all that a Chriſtian is bound to do, all is but Folly, if ye do not with this exerciſe your ſelves in the Mortification of your Corruption, denying your ſelves and your own Wills, which are corrupted by Sin, and concerning which Jeſus Chriſt has again and again repeated, *If ye will be my Diſciples, deny your ſelves.* Were not this Self-denial neceſſary, Jeſus Chriſt would not have ſo often enjoin'd it, nor all the Friends of God been ſo firm and conſtant in the Practice of it; nor would Jeſus Chriſt him-

(u) *John* iii. 12.

ſelf,

ſelf, in the Extremity of his Agony, have cried out, (x) *Father, not my Will, but thine be done.* For if ever the Will of any Man hath been holy and perfect, Chriſt's was ſuch; and yet we ſee he is jealous of it, and will not fulfil it in any thing. How then ſhall ſinful Man, that is corrupted and perverted by Sin, preſume to govern himſelf by his own Will, and to follow the Motions of his corrupt Nature, and yet nevertheleſs hope to be ſaved? In this for certain he ſhall be diſappointed; for how ſhould Corruption have Communion with God, they (y) being oppoſite, and contrary, and incompatible with one another. One muſt give way to the other, or there would be Trouble and Diſcord in Paradiſe, which is impoſſible to be there, where all is Peace, and Love, and Concord. For which Reaſon, whoſoever pretends to enter there, muſt infallibly in this Life firſt ſubdue the Corruption which Sin hath intruded into his Nature, otherwiſe he cannot be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven, where nothing (z) that's unclean can enter, and where none ſhall de admitted, but only thoſe who having put off the Man of Sin, are cloathed with the Robe of Innocence, which is the (a) Regeneration of the Spirit of Chriſt Jeſus. I ſay, thoſe only ſhall be ſaved, and enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Every one ought to ſee to it, whether he will enter therein or no, and not to impoſe upon themſelves with vain Diſcourſe and Pretences. They muſt come to Deeds; for God will not be ſatisfied with Words or Well-meanings, with which it's a common Saying, *Hell is paved.* The Old *Adam* muſt be mortified in Man before the New, (which is the Spirit of Chriſt Jeſus,) can revive in him. And if ye, my Children, are not exerciſed in the Mortification of corrupt Nature, thro' Self-Renunciation, ye cannot by any other means be made true Chriſtians.

§. 150. Don't ye underſtand what the Apoſtle ſays, ſpeaking of Man's Salvation (b), *Though you give all your Goods to feed the Poor, and though you give your Bodies to be burnt,* &c. *all avails nothing without Charity,* which is the *Love of God.* Now, no Man can love God, who does not hate himſelf. No Man can have Charity, who has not firſt deny'd himſelf, and overcome his corrupt Nature. We muſt not flatter our ſelves with falſe Perſwaſions, ſaying, or it may be believing, that we love God, when it is only our ſelves that we love, and are yet following the Motions of corrupt Nature; ſeeing

(x) *Matth.* xxvi. 42. (y) *Rom.* viii. 7. (z) *Revel.* xxi. 27. (a) *John* iii. 5. (b) *1 Cor.* xiii. 3.

Christ assures us, that (c) *We cannot serve Two Masters without Infidelity to one or the other*; so as he who retains Love and Fidelity to his corrupt Nature, is without doubt unfaithful unto God; and he who is faithful unto God, is as certainly unfaithful to his Corruption, and hateth himself. Whence we may see whether we truly love God or no: For according as we love God, we proportionably hate our selves, and we cannot love God more or less than we forsake the Love of our selves. If we deny our selves but a little, then do we love God but a little; but if we deny our selves entirely, then do we also love God entirely, and answer the *End* that God had in creating Man, which was only that he might have a Creature to love him with its whole Heart.

§. 151. And that this is the only End for which God created Man, and none other, may be comprehended by Human Reason, by considering, that Man does nothing here but suffer, and sigh, and groan under the Burthens of his Misery and Labour, and that an All-good God could not have created Man for such wretched Ends, or to clog him with so many Torments: God must needs have had in his View a nobler End than this Life when he created Man, seeing it was out of pure Love that he was pleased to create him with this beautiful World, and so many beautiful Creatures for Man's Delight, he would have him altogether delightful, and was willing to delight himself in Man. The Scripture confirmeth this, when God says, (d) *My Delight is to be with the Children of Men.* And this is the only Reason why God created Man, and for no other End, but only that he might love him, and be beloved by him.

§. 152. So that he who hopes to be saved without this *Love of God*, and *Hatred of Self*, is much deceived; seeing no Person ever attain'd to Salvation without denying himself, and dying in the Possession of the Love of God. The ancient Patriarchs, Apostles, and so many other holy Persons, could none of them be saved without this Love of God, and the Renunciation of their own Wills, no not the Virgin *Mary*, tho' she was the Mother of Jesus Christ. This is what this same Christ abundantly manifested when the People extoll'd her for being his Mother. He answer'd and said unto them, (e) *Whosoever hears these Sayings of mine, and doth them, they are my Mother and my Brethren.* As if he had said, They are not happy who can talk finely of Vertue, or prophesie, or do Miracles, or even are chosen to be the Mother of Jesus Christ;

(c) *Matth.* vi. 24. (d) *Prov.* viii. 31. (e) *Matth.* xii. 47, 50.

but

but thoſe only are happy, who renounce their corrupt Natures, that they may attain to the Love of God. Thoſe only ſhall be ſaved, and none beſides. This is what the Apoſtle likewiſe ſheweth us, ſaying (*f*), *Tho' you ſhould give all your Goods to feed the Poor, tho' ye cou'd remove Mountains, yea, tho' ye ſhould give your Bodies to be burn'd, all this availeth nothing without Charity*, which is the *Love of God.*

§. 143. How then can profligate Sinners hope for Salvation, tho' they neither love God, nor deny themſelves? Is it not plain, that this is very great Ignorance, or to ſpeak better, Infatuation of Spirit, that the Devil has implanted in Mens Hearts, by the means of their Guides, who make the People hope for Salvation, tho' they do neither deny themſelves, nor love God, guiding them thus *in the Way* (*g*) *which leadeth to perdition*; and withal, promiſing them Salvation at the end of it? Theſe be the Guides the Scripture ſpeaks of, (*h*) *who both ſhut Heaven's Gates againſt others, and enter not therein themſelves.* Wherefore do not ye, my Children, who deſire to be Chriſtians, and to work out your Salvation, do not ye amuſe your ſelves any longer with the Diſcourſes of Men, who tell you, that Chriſt hath ſatisfied all for you, and teach other ſuch Doctrines which ſuit and ſooth Senſe and Corruption; for they do but ſeduce and deceive you: Think how the Scripture ſays (*i*), *All Men are Liars.* And the Prophet (*k*) *God looked over the whole Earth, and found not one that did good*, reſuming the Individual, *no not one.* Let Men alone, he that will periſh, let him periſh; but as for you who deſire to be Chriſtians, receive Chriſt's Inſtructions into your Hearts, follow his Example and Doctrine, which is good and wholſom. This is the only Way that leadeth to Salvation, and there never has been from the Beginning of the World, nor ever ſhall be to the End of it, any Perſon ſaved, that has not obſerved this Evangelical Doctrine, at leaſt as to the Subſtance of it, ſeeing God never changes in his Deſigns. He was pleas'd to create Men, to the end that they ſhould love their God and Creator, and will always require this of them. If they do it not, this is contrary to his Deſigns. For this he will thruſt them from him, and ſay as we have it written (*l*) *Depart from me, all ye that work Iniquity*: not regarding whether they had hoped to be ſaved by the Merits of Chriſt, or no: For God has no Regard to the

(f) 1 *Cor.* xiii. 3. (g) *Matth.* vii. 13. (h) *Matth.* xxiii. 13. (i) *Pſal.* cxvi. 11. (k) *Pſal.* xli. 2. (l) *Matth.* vii. 23.

fooliſh Imaginations of corrupt Men, who frame to themſelves as many Images, as their Ideas furniſh them with Thoughts.

§. 154. They put upon the Scriptures and Divine Myſteries any Senſe or Interpretation their Fancies ſuggeſt to them; they have now framed ſo many Commentaries and Gloſſes, that they have made Chriſtendom a *Babel* of Confuſion, where one cannot find out the Truth. Tho' this be in the Goſpel, yet Men know not how to diſcover it, by reaſon of the different Interpretations that are put upon the Goſpel. Some finding that to be good in it, which others as confidently aſſert to be evil. One gives Laws, another Ceremonies, another Sacraments or Indulgencies; none of all which lead Men to the Love of God, from which we ſee them daily more and more eſtrang'd; and Experience makes it evident, that Men cleave more to theſe external means, than to the Love of God, and content themſelves with the Letter, without reaching to the Senſe, in ſuch manner as the *Jews* ſtuck to the Letter, not conſidering why God had given them theſe Laws by *Moſes*; they were ſo far forgetful of the Love of God, that they took the Law for God.

§. 155. And when they found this Law a little uneaſie to their corrupt Nature, they were willing to throw it off their Shoulders with an Apology for themſelves, *viz.* That it was impoſſible for them to keep it. Like as Men ſay now in our days. So that having forſaken the Love of God, they have forſaken his Laws alſo; and do therefore deſerve to be abandon'd by him. For God had not given them theſe Laws as Burdens to oppreſs them, but as Remedies (*m*) for their Evils: ſeeing he has no need of theſe Obſervances; being a pure Spirit, he requires nothing for himſelf but our Heart, and our Love. But Men do much want theſe external things to conſtrain their rebellious Wills to love a God whom they cannot ſee but by his Operations. Thus for this Reaſon he gave the *Jews* ſo many ſorts of Laws, namely, that in all their Actions they might be made to remember God, whom they had entirely forgotten, living only to their corrupt Nature, God was not in all their Thoughts. To recal Mens wandring Spirits, God of his great Goodneſs was pleas'd by *Moſes*'s Hand to give them ſo many ſorts of Laws to oblige them to think upon God always in their Eating, Drinking, Cloathing, Praying, and in all the other Actions which they were to perform, that they might be put in mind how they

(m) *Prov.* iv. 22.

ought

ought to love God in all. This has been God's Deſign towards Man continually, he has ever been ſending ſome Prophet or holy Perſon into the World to recal Men unto himſelf, when he ſaw them wandring from his Love. And this out of a paternal Love and Care that he had for Man; ſeeing his firſt Deſign was to delight (*n*) himſelf with Men, he cannot afterwards be willing that they (*o*) ſhould periſh; for let Man do what he pleaſes (*p*), God never changes.

§. 156. It is a great Abuſe to believe, as many do, that God has ſometimes chang'd his Laws and Ordinances; for he neither ever did, nor ever will change them. He has indeed at divers times given divers ſorts of Laws and Precepts unto Men, but this was only becauſe of the Diverſity of their Evils; as the Phyſician applies divers Remedies according to the difference of the Wounds, or Maladies of the Patient. The Law of Nature, *Moſes*'s Law, and that of the Goſpel, are all three the ſame in ſubſtance, without any Change on God's Part, who is always equal and conſiſtent with himſelf: But Men turn as Weather-cocks, are inconſtant as the Waves of the Sea, and ſet their Affections ſometimes on one thing, ſometimes on another, ſo as in order to recal them, God, according to the Love he bears them, has been oblig'd to give them Laws and Precepts ſuitable to their Failings. And thus when at the beginning God ſaw *Adam* ſet his Love upon ſo many beautiful Creatures that he had made for him, he expell'd him out of the terreſtrial Paradiſe. When he ſaw the Children of *Adam* ſet their Affections upon their Flocks and Herds, he ordered that they ſhould be ſacrificed unto him: Not that (*q*) God had need of the Beaſts, ſeeing all belong'd unto him, and he could have created an Hundred thouſand others as eaſily as he had done the firſt; but his Deſign was to have the Hearts of the Children of *Adam* ſet looſe from all ſorts of Covetouſneſs, and all Men diſengaged from all ſorts of Affections, that they might love God with all their Heart, and willingly offer unto him what they lov'd beſt in this World. In like manner God ſtood not in need of his terreſtrial Paradiſe, that he muſt baniſh *Adam* out of it, ſince this Paradiſe had been created, and made for *Adam* and all his Poſterity, which God cou'd not repent him of, ſeeing he never has, nor ever will repent of any thing. But ſeeing *Adam* amuſed himſelf by placing his Affections upon the Beauties of this terreſtrial Paradiſe,

(n) *Prov.* viii. 31, (o) 2 *Pet.* iii. 9. (p) *Jam.* i. 17. (q) *Pſal.* l. 9. 13.

he made him to be driven out, leaſt he ſhould finally ſet all his Affections on earthly things, and forget his God. In conſideration of *Adam*'s Weakneſs he was pleas'd to deprive him of an occaſion, which might have made him fall into further Sins.

§. 157. Thus has God always had regard to the Salvation of Mens Souls, to call them back to himſelf (when they were gone aſtray) by Laws, and Precepts, and Commandments, that by theſe Men might both know their Faults, and ſee how to amend them. But wicked Men have turn'd this fatherly Care and Love of their God into Contempt and Calumnies, receiving his Medicines as if they were grievous Poiſons, ſaying, That God's Laws are inſupportable, and that it is impoſſible for the Frailty of the human Nature to keep theſe Laws. Nor has this been the Language of the *Jews* only, but the Chriſtians alſo ſay the ſame at this time, blaſpheming God thus in requital of his Favours, inſtead of bleſſing and giving Thanks to him for his Care of the Salvation of our Souls, for his condeſcending to abaſe himſelf ſo far as to give us ſo wholſom Inſtructions, ſeeing he was not concern'd either in the Salvation or Damnation of Men, being in himſelf compleatly perfect, content and ſatisfy'd. And tho' all Men in general were damned to all Eternity, God's Glory would not be a whit leſs than if they all were ſaved. 'Tis Man only that is the better or worſe for his Salvation or Damnation.

§. 158. Wherefore every Man ought to examine, whether he is willing to embrace God's Laws for curing the Wounds of his Soul; or if he will ſay unto God, Phyſician, heal thy ſelf with thy Medicines; we will have nothing to do with them, they are too bitter for us: The preſent Chriſtians, 'tis true, do not ſpeak this in ſo many Words, but the Effect is more than Words; and we ſee that, in effect, they live in Contempt of God's Law, being perſwaded by their blind and wicked Guides, that it is impoſſible to obſerve it. Which can be no other than a Deluſion, there being no other remedy for the Diſeaſes of our Souls, but the Obſervance of this Law; without which our Souls ſhould periſh in the Corruption of the Ulcers of Sin, which comes to be incurable through our neglecting to obſerve this Law. It is every Man's particular Concern to ſee to this, whether he will die in his Sins, or take and ſwallow down the Medicines that God has himſelf prepared for the Health of human Souls. We have no Choice but one or other of theſe; and therefore let us not amuſe our ſelves with the Words of Men, who lie and deceive one another, flattering themſelves to their

their own Deſtruction, making a thing, which is ſo neceſſary, appear impoſſible; and by this means rendring Mens Salvation deſperate, that they may all die in Deſpair. Theſe be the Devil's moſt powerful Agents in the World, for after Deſpair there's no more to be look'd for. It is with this, as in Nature, where we can recover nothing which the Fire has devour'd: for there is ſome Remedy for all other Evils. If our Garment be torn, we mend, or turn, or piece it; but if the Fire devour it, all is loſt without Remedy: ſo in like manner, for certain are all Men loſt, who believe that they cannot keep God's Commandments; for they will never endeavour to ſtrive againſt hope, and yet cannot poſſibly be ſaved (*r*) except they keep them. This is the laſt Fire, which the Scripture ſays (*s*) will devour all at the End of the World, to which we are unqueſtionably come; ſeeing all Men ſuffer themſelves to be conſumed in this infernal Flame, believing that Men cannot keep the Commandments of God. There's no more Cure for their Evils, no Salvation can be hoped for ſuch Perſons, who make their Maladies incurable, by chuſing rather to die, than make uſe of the Remedies exhibited to 'em; tho' they be very good and wholſom, yea, ſweet and agreeable, even for this Life, and moſt ſalutary for the Life to come. The Devil has ſo bewitch'd Men to make them believe a Lie, as they run all in the broad Way which leads inſenſibly to Perdition, under a falſe (*t*) Hope of Salvation.

§. 159. My Children, leave theſe Wanderers to walk in the way that leads to Perdition, ſeeing they will not part with it: But do ye, whoſe Eyes God hath opened, that ye may know the Truth, embrace the Means of your Salvation; and do your Endeavours by means of an Evangelical Life, to recover the *Love of God* which ye have loſt by your Sins. For ye cannot poſſibly be ſaved, if at your Death your Soul is not endued with *this Divine Love*: neither ye, nor any Perſon has ever been, or ever ſhall be ſaved by any other means. Wherefore ye may juſtly fear this neceſſity, ſeeing it is true. Were it otherwiſe, I would have told you; for I have never deceived any; and it would be much more agreeable to Nature, if I could ſay without a Lie, My Children, ye are the true Friends of God, ye fulfil his Will, and ſhall ſurely be ſaved. How would theſe things rejoyce my Soul, and ſet yours to reſt! and how pleaſant ſhould our Converſation be

(*r*) *Matth.* vii. 20, 26, 27. *John* xii. 50. (*s*) *Pſal.* l. 3. *Iſa.* xxxiii. 11, 12. (*t*) *Prov.* x. 24. *Ibid.* xi. 7.

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in God! I ſhould not any more have occaſion to grumble or find fault with your Actions, were we all conformed to the Will of God, and united in his Pleaſure, of one Heart, and one Will. But alas! this Conſolation has not as yet happen'd to me. I have nothing but the Diſpleaſure of ſeeing you ſtill follow the Motions of corrupt Nature, and continually reproving and correcting your Faults, and lamenting my own Barrenneſs, that I have not yet formed one Child in the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, who might ſucceed me in the Graces that God has beſtowed upon me, tho' my great Conſolation would be, if after my Death I might leave this Divine Spirit as (u) *Elijah* left his Spirit, even in a double Portion, to his Servant *Eliſha*, when he left him his Mantle. It's true, my Children, ſome of you have forſaken the World, that ye might follow Chriſt, paſſing the firſt Bridge in your Journey to Eternity; yea, ſome of you are ſet free from the Covetouſneſs and Riches of this World, by refuſing to trade or labour any more in order to acquire them. Yet notwithſtanding all this, it is not true, that ye have entirely ſubmitted your Wills to the Will of God, ſo as to let your ſelves be guided and govern'd by it: For I ſee you oft-times chuſe rather to do evil in your own Will, than to do that which is very good in the Will of God. So much are ye yet addicted to your own Wills, that ye acquieſce more willingly in your own corrupt Mind, than in the Holy Will of God.

§. 160. I muſt not leave you ignorant of theſe things, otherwiſe ye would believe, that *ye are govern'd by King Jeſus*; as our new Sectaries make the People to believe, that all who range themſelves on their ſide, are govern'd by King Jeſus; tho' indeed they are govern'd by the Devil, and live after their Fleſh and Blood, ſacrificing to their Eaſe, and Appetite, and Senſualities, yea, even to their carnality: For it is ſaid of thoſe new Sectaries, that they uſe great Familiarities among themſelves, that Carnal Converſation is common among them, and that they maintain they are not bound to marry a Wife, till ſhe have born them Children. Are not theſe ſpecial Reſtorers of *Iſrael*, as they deſign themſelves, who eat, and drink, and marry, as did the Generation of the Wicked in *Noah's* Days, of whom the Scripture ſpeaks, (x) who liv'd after this rate until they were all ſwallow'd up in the Waters of the Deluge? Thus do theſe Sectaries continue to live luxuriouſly, and careleſs themſelves; calling thoſe Familiarities Chriſtian Friendſhips, until they be ſwallow'd up in the Gulf of Hell, with the Rich Man in the Goſpel, for

(u) 2 *King.* ii. 9, 15. (x) *Luke* xvii. 26, 27. ha-

having followed his Example under Pious Pretexts, and falſe Explications.

§. 161. My Children, ye have reaſon to thank God that ye are out of the danger of ſuch a ſeduction, and that he has given you a Mother, who does not flatter you to your deſtruction; but lays your faults open before you, ſhewing at the ſame time the means to correct them. This is the greateſt Happineſs that could ever befal you, ſeeing Ignorance is no excuſe for Sin; nor can the falſe Perſwaſions of Men, deliver them from Damnation. This is the reaſon why I repeat it again and again, that ye cannot be ſaved ſo long as you follow the Motions of corrupt Nature: ye muſt overcome and ſubdue it before ye die, or your Damnation is certain. Ye may flatter your ſelves with vain hopes as ye pleaſe, ye ſhall nevertheleſs go to Hell, if during this Life ye have not overcome the corruption that Sin introduc'd into the human Nature: ſeeing it is an abomination unto God, and therefore cannot reſide with him. He putteth far away from him all thoſe that are not cloath'd with the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt.

§. 162. This Regeneration is ſo neceſſary, that no Perſon ſhall ever enter into Paradiſe but thoſe that are regenerated; as none but ſuch have ever hitherto entered therein, ſince (y) *no unclean thing ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* And therefore, my Children, ſuffer not your ſelves to be ſeduc'd with falſe Appearances; lay to Heart your own Eternal Salvation, tho' all the World beſides ſhould periſh. It will be enough for you to be ſav'd your ſelves: Lay hold of the *Evangelical Life*, it is the only true means of your Salvation. Every other hope beſides this, is vain and deceitful. Ye muſt either take up the *Goſpel Spirit*, or go to Hell: For Chriſt himſelf affirm'd to *Nicodemus*, (z) *That if he was not Converted and made like unto a little Child, he ſhould not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* The meaning is not that he could enter corporally into his Mother's Womb and be born a-new, but that he ought to be turn'd away from Vanity unto the Truth of God, and reſume the Spirit of the riſing Church, ſubmitting his Will entirely unto God's guidance, to let himſelf be govern'd by him, as a little Child is govern'd (a) by its Nurſe. This is the Converſion and Infancy that God requires of all that would be ſav'd; and none ſhall be ſaved by any other means, as Jeſus Chriſt aſſur'd us, ſaying, (b) *Verily, Verily, I ſay unto you, that except ye be Converted, and become as little Children, ye ſhall not*

(y) *Rev.* xxi. 27. (z) *Joh.* iii. 3, 7. (a) *Pſal.* cxxxi. 2.
(b) *Matt.* xviii. 3.

enter

ter into the Kingdom of Heaven. This Sacred Mouth cannot Swear falſly; he ſpeaks the Truth; and never ſhall any Perſon be admitted into Paradiſe, who has not firſt in this World been Converted, and reſign'd unto God to be conducted by him as a little Child, in the way of the Goſpel.

§. 163. Take your meaſures from hence, my Children, and examine whether ye have in your Soul this Diſpoſition and Reſolution to embrace the *Evangelical Life*: and if ye have not yet attain'd to it, it is in vain for you to ſtay with me, to be an impediment to me, and uneaſy to your ſelves: For I will never ceaſe to reprove all that is inconſiſtent with this *Evangelical Life*; and it will be very uneaſy for you to bear continual Reprehenſions; and I loſe my time in correcting what ye are unwilling to reſtrain. Wherefore it were better that ye ſhould continue ſeparated from me, till ſuch time as ye have taken up a ſtrong and effectual Reſolution to become Children of God, and to give your ſelves up entirely to be guided and govern'd by him, as a little Child is ſubject to the will of the Nurſe, which is ſo entirely abandon'd unto her, as ſhe may kill or keep it alive as ſhe pleaſes; the Infant making no reſiſtance, but being contented with all that the Nurſe does to it. Such ought the diſpoſition of a Chriſtian to be; he ought to have no deſires, but to be wholly reſign'd to the Will of God both in Life and Death.

§. 164. Then have we reaſon to rejoyce, and to hope for the Kingdom of Heaven upon good grounds, and not from a falſe hope and groundleſs Preſumption, bottom'd upon the deceitful Reaſons of Men; but relying only upon God's Promiſes, who hath ſaid, that (*c*) as ſoon as the Sinner ſhall be converted, he ſhall obtain Mercy; and who likewiſe aſſures Damnation to thoſe who will not turn. Why ſhou'd we amuſe our ſelves any longer in examining the Diſcourſes of Men, ſeeing we muſt neceſſarily (*d*) fall into the hands of God? Were it not better to ſatisfy our Judge, than thoſe mercenary Men, who govern for their own Intereſt, flattering People in their Sins, and in the way that is not good, that by theſe means they may gain their Hearts and Purſe. Surely, my Children, all the Men of the World together cannot ſave us, nor give us any thing for Eternal Life. We muſt come all alone before God, and appear there in Perſon, without any of thoſe Guides or Sectarians to plead for us; they will have enough to do to anſwer for themſelves.

(c) *Ezek.* xxxiii. 12. (d) *Eccleſ.* iii. 17.

§. 165.

§. 165 We muſt have Chriſt for our Advocate, otherwiſe our Cauſe is already loſt; and we ſhall not have him to plead for us, if we have not been willing to be his Diſciples in this World: For he ſays in the Prayer which he offer'd up to his Father, (e) *I pray not for the World, but for thoſe whom Thou haſt given me out of the World*, &c. Whence it followeth, that thoſe Perſons who are not willing to be his Diſciples, and to follow his Evangelical Spirit, ſhall not have Jeſus Chriſt for their Advocate when they die. This is a certain Truth, ſeeing the Father will not receive any Perſon into his Kingdom, who has not put on the Regeneration Garment of the new *Adam*, wherewith Chriſt was Cloathed; and which is no other, but ſelf-denial, and the mortification of corrupt Nature. This is the only true Wedding-Garment, wherewith except one is Cloathed, he ſhall not be admitted to the Marriage Feaſt: But ſuch ſhall be treated like that Impudent Man in the Goſpel, to whom it was ſaid, (f) *Bind him hand and foot, and caſt him into outer Darkneſs*, which is *The ſenſible Torments of Hell.* And it will matter very little whatever the pretext be, under which a Man has omitted to deny himſelf; whether his hopes were in the Satisfaction of Jeſus Chriſt, or whether he relied on Sacraments and Good Works, or on the Promiſes of his Paſtors; all this is Coin that will not paſs, ſeeing God regards only whether we are Cloath'd with the Marriage Garment of Self-denial, and have renounc'd the Mortality of our old corruption. He enquires not by what means we have attain'd to this hatred of our ſelves, if we have acquir'd it, and can appear before God in this Wedding Garment of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, having entirely put off, yea, *torn* the tatters of the old corruption, with which all Men come Cloath'd into this miſerable World. From all which it is eaſy to comprehend, that none can poſſibly be ſaved, if they have not firſt in this Life ſubdued that woful Corruption, with which they are born: For ſo long as we continue Children of Wrath and Perdition (as we (g) are all by nature) we are ſtill Enemies to God, and conſequently cannot be admitted into his Kingdom.

§. 166. This Ruſt muſt be taken away, and theſe blemiſhes waſh'd out by (h) the co-operation of Man's Free-Will; ſince God was pleas'd to create Man once Free, he never afterwards makes uſe of Force. He leaves Man to act in this, after he comes to the uſe of Reaſon; 'tis his part to chuſe (i) whether

(e) *Joh.* xvii. 9. (f) *Matth.* xxii. 13. (g) *Eph.* ii. 3. (h) *Ezek.* xviii. 31. (i) *Deut.* xxx.

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he will follow his Corruption, or overcome it. But Jesus Christ admonishes both of the Happiness that attends the one, and the Misery that is consequent upon the other, saying, (k) *He that saveth his Life shall lose it, and he that loseth his Life, shall find it.* That is, he who loves and humors his Corruption, shall lose Eternal Life; and he who despises and crosses his Corruption, shall have a Life of Eternal Happiness. All Men are free to chuse one or other of these two, but cannot enjoy both together. If they have a mind to please and gratify their Corruption, then they ought not (l) to look for Salvation. But if they get the better of this Corruption by denying all its inclinations, (m) they have an assurance of a Life of Eternal Bliss. This is like as if one were plac'd in the midst, betwixt Fire (†) and Water, and might turn to what hand he pleas'd. In this, Man is altogether free, seeing God has been pleas'd that Man should have full liberty, which shall never be taken away from him.

§. 167. This is the Light which God giveth me; and I should be no Friend to your Souls if I did not communicate it unto you: Ah! What would it avail them if I should flatter your Corruption, by promising you Salvation! This would be more agreeable to the brutal Senses, but could not deliver you from Damnation. Ye would buy my flattery very dear, to remain eternally in Hell for it. It would be a sorry Paradise that ye would chuse, instead of Eternal Joy and Felicity! Is it not good for you, My Children, that ye have found one that does not flatter you, but speaks the Truth as it is before God, and shews you the straight way of Salvation without disguise or deceit; one that is willing to take you by the hand (so to speak) and lead you directly to God? And now the time of his last Mercy is come, when he shall be merciful to all that take up his *Gospel Spirit*, which he has taught me in all its circumstances, and has promis'd me that many shall follow me therein.

§. 168. My Children, if ye have a mind to be of the number, ye must put on a new resolution absolutely to quit your own Will, that ye may give it up entirely to the Will of God, suffering your selves to be wholly manag'd by him, as a little Child is by the Nurse. Think well what dependance the Child has upon its Nurse, that ye may in like manner resign your selves to the Government of God your Heavenly Father.

(k) *Matth.* x. 39. (l) *Rom.* viii. 13. (m) *Ibid.* (†) *Eccles.* xv. 16, 17.

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An Infant hath nothing Selfish in its Nature; being incapable to do any thing without Assistance, except it be to cry, and void its excrements; every thing else must be taught it.

(1) It must be taught to eat; for were it left to it self, it would eat the Dust, or any other Dirt that came next, which would be very hurtful to it.

(2.) It must be taught to go; for if it do this by it self, it presently falls and hurts it self upon the first Motion of its Body.

(3.) It must be taught to speak; for were it left to it self in this, it could not make it self be understood, or be useful to others.

(4.) It must be taught to Work; for otherwise it would marr every thing that it sets its hand to.

(5.) Finally, It must be taught rightly to manage and govern its Memory and Understanding, and all the faculties of its Soul; otherwise its Vicious Passions would make it Insolent and Insupportable to its self and others.

These be the natural Qualities of a Child, common to all the Children of *Adam*; which in their Spiritual Sense, must be found in him that would enter into God's Kingdom, seeing Jesus Christ says, (n) That except a Man be converted, and become like a little Child, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

§. 169. Whosoever would enter there, ought chiefly to know that 'tis his business rather *to mourn* for his own Sins, than to preach unto others: For (o) *What shall it profit a Man if he gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul?* He must likewise *purge* all Earthly Affections out of his Soul, vomiting up all the Sensualities of his Body, as *the ordure and excrements* of his Soul. Those two things are chiefly necessary, in order to our Conversion unto God, and becoming his true Children through Grace; without these, none can be dispos'd to receive the Conditions which God requires in one that is Converted unto him.

§. 170. After he has purged his Soul of all Affections and Pretensions to the things of the Earth, and has wept and bewail'd his past Life. Then,

(1.) He must *learn to Eat*: For if he receives not the Nourishment of his Soul, he must languish and Die. The Food that nourisheth the Soul is the Holy Scripture, (p) the Word of God, which comprehends all that God has revealed unto

(n) *Matth.* xviii. 3. (o) *Matth.* xvi. 26. (p) *Matth.* iv. 4.

his

his Friends, to ſerve as nouriſhment to all that are willing to be his Children; having come himſelf into the World, to nouriſh them with this Holy Doctrine, without which there's no Salvation: For if we feed on the Doctrines of Men, and drink in foreign Sentiments here and there as we meet with them, we do thus but eat the filth of the Earth, which cannot maintain us in the Faith which God infus'd in our Souls at their Creation. We muſt receive our nouriſhment of our Heavenly Father, who knows what is good for us, and will not fail to give us meat in due ſeaſon. If we do but only (q) open the mouth by Prayer, he will forthwith fill it with the Gifts of Faith and Charity, which all the Science and Study in the World can never give us; becauſe they are Gifts that proceed immediately from our Heavenly Father, and (r) not from our knowledge or induſtry, which rather hinders us from being True Children; we cannot know his Secrets (s) if we are not willing to be Ignorant of every other thing.

We ought therefore to *learn to eat*, and muſt not feed our ſelves by our own ſtrength or induſtry; becauſe whilſt we imagine we are taking good nouriſhment, we may be eating that which will hurt us, and filling our Souls with vain and fruitleſs Speculations. A thing that happens to thoſe that are higheſt in the Contemplations of Divine Matters; who think they have found God, when they are full of their fine Conceptions, and underſtand what the Saints have ſaid and done. And, for my part, I do believe that none ſhall ever be the Child of God, ſuch as he would have him, until he has emptied himſelf of every Image, that he may be repleniſh'd only with what God giveth.

(2.) The Child ought *to learn to walk*; that is, he who is the Child of God, ought not to walk of himſelf, but to follow God's Conduct when, and after what manner it pleaſeth him. Many Men are guilty of groſs Sins, for thruſting themſelves into places and dignities (be they ever ſo good) without God's guidance and direction. Others walk by the way of Auſterities; or particular Devotions, or pious Enterpriſes; and theſe ſometimes exceeding painful; in all which they ſhew themſelves very patient; but when any Tribulation cometh ſuddenly upon them from the Hand of God, they grieve and murmur for being depriv'd of their accuſtom'd pious Exerciſes, or particular Devotions. Neither of theſe are Children, but wiſe Men, that will direct their own goings; whereas he that is the Child

(q) *Pſal.* lxxxi. 11. (r) *Matth.* xi. 25. (s) 1 *Cor.* iii. 18. *Phil.* iii 7, 8,

of

of God will not advance one foot but under the conduct of his Father, not giving himſelf unto any thing but what pleaſes him; he ſuffers with indifference all that happens to him, tho' the Devil himſelf were the Author of it. He lives continually in a ſtate of dependance, contentment, and entire ſubmiſſion to his Father.

§. 172. (3.) The Child's third quality is, that it ought *to learn to Speak*. The Child of God ought to believe, that he cannot ſay any good if he learns it not of his Father; and that nothing ought to proceed out of his Mouth, but what is profitable for the Edification of others. They are grown Men who are pleas'd with fine Diſcourſes, and oftentimes ſpeak that which is Evil, and is not available to any Man's Salvation: For they are like the ſounding Braſs, whereas Jeſus Chriſt ſays, (*t*) That *we muſt not ſpeak that which profiteth not*. This is our Father's preſcription, which St. *Paul* had learn'd to follow, ſeeing he ſaid (*u*), that *he did not come with Words of Eloquence*.

§. 173. (4.) The fourth quality is, *He muſt learn to Work*. The Child of God labours not for the Riches and Honours of this World, but for thoſe that are permanent, according to what Chriſt adviſes, ſaying, (*x*) *Labour not to lay up Treaſures on Earth, where the Moth and Ruſt do corrupt, and Thieves break through and ſteal; but lay up Treaſures for Heaven*. This is what the true Children of God labour for; And this is what their Father teaches them. Others labour only for Corruption, and their Works are marr'd.

§. 174. (5.) A Child is to learn *the right government of his Underſtanding, and all the Faculties of his Soul*. If the Child of God ſubmits not all his Paſſions to his Father, (*y*) to be *meek* and *gentle*, and that he ought (*z*) *to deny himſelf*: He who has not all his Paſſions ſubdued, cannot be the Child of God, but is a burthen both to himſelf and others.

§. 175. Theſe are all the Conditions requir'd of one that would be Converted, that he may enter into Paradiſe. None ſhall come there, according to what Chriſt ſays, but thoſe that have the qualities of a little Child, which is entirely under the conduct of its Father, not being capable to do any thing of it ſelf. Thoſe who think it ſufficient for one to abſtain from Evil, are far from the right underſtanding of our Saviour's Words; who ſpeaks of a little Child that is not yet capable

(t) *Matth.* xii. 36. *Iſai.* lviii. 9, 13. (u) 1 *Cor.* xi. 1. (x) *Joh.* vi. 27. and *Matth.* vi. 19, 20. (y) *Matth.* xi. 29. (z) *Matth.* xvi. 24.

of any Evil. Had he thought the bare Abſtaining from Evil ſufficient for ones being Converted, and becoming like a little Child, he would not have choſen an Emblem ſo wide of his purpoſe; for a little Child cannot be Converted, ſeeing it has never done any Evil, not being in a capacity to commit Evil, as grown Men are, who ought to be Converted, and to ſubject themſelves to the whole Will of God; as the little Child is entirely in the Nurſes diſpoſal, ſuffering it ſelf to be guided and manag'd, dreſs'd and undreſs'd, laid to reſt and taken up again, as ſhe pleaſes; eating and drinking only what ſhe thinks fit to give it, uſing no other means to obtain what it would have but its Cries, and the Teſtimonies of the Affection that it bears her.

§. 176. O Wretched Man! Poor Worm of the Earth! Why doſt thou find it ſo difficult to give thy ſelf up to the conduct and government of thy Heavenly Father? Hath not he created thee? Doth not he ſupport thee? And is not he only able to ſave thee? Waſt not thou Nothing when he Created thee? And if he did not ſupport thee, wouldſt thou not fall back into the ſame *Nothing*? And if he doth not ſave thee, is there any created Power that is able to ſave thee? Has not he alſo all Divine Wiſdom wherewith to govern thee? and all Love to care for thee? What makes thee afraid to be govern'd by ſuch a Lord? Doſt thou think that the Weakneſs of thy poor Love, is more capable of this Government, than thy Creator, thy Saviour, and thy Judge? Doſt thou not ſee that all human Power, how great ſoever it may be, is nothing but weakneſs, that all human Wiſdom is but Ignorance, and that all the whole Creation together cannot ſave ſo much as one Soul? Conſider once more what thou art! And thou wilt bluſh for ſhame, that thou haſt not given up thy ſelf to be govern'd by thy God, who wou'd have made thee happy and Wiſe; whereas thy own Inclinations and Will, have render'd thee miſerable and reſtleſs, having thy Paſſions for the Tormentors and Tortures of thy Soul. Is it not high time for thee to ceaſe to live unto thy ſelf and at thy own diſcretion, and to ſurrender thy ſelf to thy merciful Father, and make thine own Will a ſacrifice to his? One muſt be loſt to all ſenſe that refuſes this, conſidering the advantage that is to be reap'd from hence, and what miſchief we bring upon our ſelves, by following our own Wills and Inclinations; which being prejudicial to our Salvation, will therefore bring us to Eternal Death.

§. 177. Why don't we give our ſelves unto him, to whom we belong? Are we not entirely God's, both Body and Soul? Can

Can all Nature together make one Hair of our Head? We know by both Divine and Human Faith, that there was a time when we were not; and that it's but ſome few Years ſince we began to be, being nothing before; and that God alone created both our Body and Soul, with every thing that's uſeful for the ſupport of Life. He hath created the Water to waſh us, the Fire to heat, the Earth to bear us, and the Air for us to breath in it. He has given us all the Powers of our Souls, with all the Members of our Bodies, and no Man is capable to give us one moment of Life, if God were not the ſupport of it. Ought not all this to bind us to an univerſal and abſolute dependance upon God? Is it not great robbery to take the power and government of our ſelves out of his hands, and put it into the hands of our own underſtanding, which is nothing but darkneſs and ignorance? Muſt ſo beautiful a Soul give obedience to brutal and lawleſs Paſſions, in prejudice of its righteous Lord and Sovereign?

§. 178. O the impiety! The cruel injury we do unto our ſelves! The never to be repair'd loſs we ſuſtain by continuing under this Tyranny that we have ſo fully experienc'd! For no Man can ſay with Truth, that he has found true contentment by following his own Will, but all muſt confeſs that their own Paſſions and ſenſe have been as Tyrants and Lords over them. How many be there in the World that groan under this misfortune? And how many are there in Hell, who in their deſperate complainings curſe the moment they began to follow their own Inclinations, which have brought them to thoſe eternal miſeries? All this conſider'd, can there be any Perſon ſo void of Judgment as to follow his own Inclinations, or to ſuffer himſelf to be govern'd by his natural Senſes, which tend only to the Earth and Fleſh, to the prejudice of Heaven, and both temporal and eternal Bliſs? For the Man who reſigns himſelf unto God's government, is happy both here and to all Eternity; becauſe this merciful Father (*a*) ſees to the Happineſs both of his Soul and Body, ſince they both equally belong to him in property: This is what himſelf aſſures us, ſaying, (*b*) That *he numbers all the Hairs of our Head, and that none of them ſhall fall to the ground without him.*

§. 179. How inſignificant is our anxiety in taking ſuch care of our Bodies, when all our induſtry is not able to give us one moment of Life! What need we ſtudy ſo much to cultivate our Minds, when one little defluxion falling upon

(a) *Pſal* lxxiii. 23, 24. (b) *Matth.* x. 30.

the Brain, makes Fools even of the moſt Learned? What folly is it to think that Vertue may be acquir'd by ſpeculation, or other human means; when it conſiſts in Faith, which is a Light infus'd into our Souls, by the ſame God who gave us our Being? Don't we ſee all our own Wiſdom, is Folly; all our own Knowledge, is Ignorance; and all our own Strength, is Weakneſs? Shall we be ſo deſtitute of Reaſon, as to yield up our ſelves to be govern'd by our Paſſions, which are the greateſt Enemies of our Souls? Let us ſubmit unto our God, before it is too late; for after Death there is no remiſſion. Let us from this moment entirely divorce our ſelves from our own Will. Let us reſtore the Supremacy and Government of our Souls, Bodies, and Spirits unto God, the moſt High over all; becauſe without him we are not able to work any thing for our ſelves but Evil and Damnation: Evil being ſo natural to us, as that our Sins would oppreſs us, if the Grace of God did not prevent it; even as a Child would be ſuffocated in filth, as ſoon as it comes into the World, if there were none to aſſiſt it, and clean it.

§. 180. Surely did we rightly conſider the Miſery of our Souls and Bodies, we ſhould pray unto God night and day, that he would be pleas'd to take the government of them, and would our ſelves do nothing, but receive all that Happineſs from his Hand: For oftentimes we have the greateſt Favour ſhown us in that which to us appears to be moſt adverſe; and if God ſometimes binds us as it were hand and foot, ſo that we cannot do what we would; he does but what the diſcreet Nurſe does in muffling and binding up the hands of the Infant; which if it had them free, it might therewith ſcratch its Face, yea, pull out its own Eyes, and ſuffer more this way, than all the pleaſure of having its Hands looſe would amount to: And thus in like manner we have often a Mind to do ſomething which to us appears to be agreeable; but God puts a ſtop to it thro' ſome deficiency in our Wealth, or Friends, or Health. Theſe be the Fillets and Swath-bands wherewith we are bound up and hindred from wounding our Souls: For, frequently, tho' the thing appears good to us, the conſequence would be Evil. This God foreſees when we are Ignorant of it. But, were we his true Children, we ſhould admit of no deſires, even tho' they might ſeem good, but only that of doing his Pleaſure. Then would all be equal unto us, doing or not doing: For when we are troubled and diſcontented, becauſe matters ſucceed not as we would have them, we do but like the Child that cries becauſe it is ſwadled and cared for. Tho' this be no wiſe agreeable to the Nurſe,

yet

yet will ſhe not for all its crying ceaſe to do her duty. No more will God ever forbear to do that which is for our good. But we are ungrateful when we murmur againſt it.

§. 181. If he raiſes us to Grandeur, or Honours, or any other Proſperity, let us bleſs and thank him; as the Child ſmiles and more cloſely Embraces the Nurſe who takes it up, ſo ought we to adhere moſt carefully unto God in our Proſperity, as having greater need of his Grace to preſerve us from falling, like as the Child wants more care when it is taken up, than when it is laid to ſleep: For it cannot fall unleſs it will be riſing all alone. So in like manner, one that quietly and contentedly continues in the ſtate and condition wherein God firſt plac'd him, cannot fall into preſumption, except he go about to raiſe himſelf, by deſiring and aſpiring to Riches, or Honours. This would make him run the hazard of falling, yea, of incurring his own Death, becauſe Honours change Mens Manners, and Grandeurs pervert their Hearts; eſpecially thoſe that ſeek after them and purſue them; which no true Child of God will do, becauſe of the danger he foreſees in them: For if we find difficulty in making up the account of our Conſciences, how can we deſire the Charge of others, over whom we have leſs Power than over our ſelves? Surely, no Child of God (c) will ever of himſelf raiſe himſelf unto any Change whatſoever. And if God raiſes him, he will be the more afraid, without he has an entire Confidence in the Strength and Power of his Father who has call'd him to it. And that Men may not impoſe upon themſelves, they muſt prove themſelves to know if they would be as well pleas'd to ſee themſelves buried in the Oblivion and Contempt of Men, as if they were rais'd in their regards and praiſes, then would they have nothing to fear. But if they complain and murmur in their Adverſity, it is a ſign they are not yet reſign'd unto the Will of their God: For he leads more in the way of Contempt and Adverſity, than in the paths of Proſperity and Praiſe. One ought likewiſe to think himſelf more Happy under Humiliations and Contempt, than when Men Praiſe and Honour him; becauſe by theſe he is made more conformable to his God made Man; who has likewiſe told him, (d) *Whom I Love, I Chaſtiſe.* And it is great ground of Joy for one to have in himſelf this mark of Love, ſeeing he hears the ſame Father ſay, (e) *Rejoyce ye when Men ſhall ſay Evil againſt you falſly for my ſake; your Reward ſhall be great in Heaven.*

(c) *Luk.* xiv. 11. (d) *Rev.* iii. 19. (e) *Matth.* v. 11.

§. 182. Whence comes it then, that ſo few do learn and obſerve theſe Inſtructions, and that all Men practiſe the contrary, in flying from Contempt, and following after Praiſe? It is becauſe Men will not become Children, to receive the Milk of Underſtanding from our true Nurſing Father; who has brought his holy Doctrine into the World, to be the Food and Nouriſhment of Souls: Which Doctrine only we ought to love, as the Child loves only the Breaſt that gives Life to its Body, and without which it cou'd but languiſh and die; as our Souls alſo would do, were they deprived of the Word of their God, which is only able to keep them alive. It is no Wonder that ſo many Souls are dead to Faith, ſeeing they (f) *have forſaken the Fountain of living Waters, and have digged to themſelves broken Ciſterns, which can hold no Water*: For it is corrupted through length of Time, it being long ſince it fell from Heaven. Men have received the Doctrine of Chriſt, which he brought from Heaven; their Souls have been nouriſh'd and fed with it, and they have tranſmitted it to ſucceeding Generations, even till our Days. But the Veſſels wherein it ought to have been kept have been corrupted and ſpoil'd; ſo that it is come to ſtink in the Noſtrils of Men, who ſtrive to give it another Colour and Scent, that it may reliſh better to our natural Senſes. My Meaning is, that the Doctrine of Chriſt is by this Time ſo diſfigured with Explications and Comments, that it can hardly be known, but only in its Source, which is the written Goſpel: And this is in the Hands of all Chriſtians, where it is miraculouſly preſerv'd, according to what he promiſed to his Church; namely, That it will be ſtrongly oppoſed and reſiſted, but never totally overcome. What Chriſtians are there now, who do not by their Works contradict the Goſpel? Every one would be giving it a new Colour. One will ſay, a Chriſtian may pretend to Honours, and Riches, and Dignities; and another, that he may ſtudy his Eaſe, and Conveniencies or Intereſts; nay, that even the Prieſts and Miniſters, the Prelates and Heads of the Church ought to defend and ſupport their Authority by the Pomp and Magnificence of the World. Is not this a great Corruption ſpringing from the Veſſels which ſhould preſerve this holy Doctrine? This Putrefaction is capable to infect the whole World. For he who thinks to draw out the Water of Life from the Place where it has been lodged, will draw nothing now but Poiſon, produced by the Corruption of the Veſſels; and will find Death

(f) Jer. ii. 13.

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where he fought for Life. And indeed if Chriſt had not (g) promiſed to continue always with us by his Doctrine, it were impoſſible for thoſe that call themſelves Chriſtians and the Church, to preſerve the written Goſpel in its Integrity; becauſe the Contents of it are a continual Check and Correction to them. We ſee that all the Fury of Hell, together with the Malice of Men, have not been able to ſuppreſs this Doctrine, which is the true and lawful Spouſe of Jeſus Chriſt: And if there be few that embrace it, it is becauſe few are willing to become Children, that they may receive Nouriſhment from their true Nurſing Father, but chuſe rather to take Meat and Drink for themſelves, or to ſeek their Food among their Corruptions.

§. 183. Thus as a Child takes Cinders, Coals, and all kinds of Excrements that it can find for it ſelf to eat; ſo Man, who refuſes to be nouriſhed by his God, feeds himſelf with the curious Sciences of Philoſophy and Poetry, and other Reveries, that are only the Excrements of the Earth, which cannot nouriſh nor preſerve the Soul. For whatſoever is Fleſh, is not Spirit; and though one had acquir'd all the Sciences in the World, and made himſelf perfect and accompliſhed in the Eyes of all Men, what would all this avail him at his Death? He will then remain empty, having all his Life beaten the Air with no Profit to himſelf: He ſhall carry nothing with him but the Smoak of Vain-glory and Praiſe of Men, which will be his Condemnation before God, who had given him an Underſtanding to know him, and a Will to love him; both which he has employ'd to render himſelf accompliſh'd to Creatures as frail as himſelf, which can pay him nothing but empty Praiſe, tranſient like themſelves, without one Moment's Stability.

§. 184. Conſider what it is that Man is taken up with. A reaſonable Creature, created in the Image and Likeneſs of God, with a Soul immortal as he is, debaſes himſelf to feed with Beaſts, and to regard the Diſcourſes of Men, which, like the green Herb, are in a little time withered and corrupted! Have we not lived long enough in this woful Stupidity! Is it not high time for us to come to our ſelves, and be converted to God as little Children, who can do nothing in order to the obtaining what they deſire, but only cry, and ſhew as they can their Affection to the Nurſe that cares for them? If we would have the Grace of God, we need neither Riches, nor Wiſdom, nor Honor to procure it, but only Tears of Con-

(g) *Matth.* xxviii. 20.

trition, proceeding from a Grief of Heart, for having offended our God and our Father. By this means ſhall we obtain Grace to be converted unto him, and to ſhew our Love to him by the Effects of it.

§. 185. But how is this to be done by Men, who are wiſe in their own Eyes, and think they do well to imitate the Perfections of thoſe whom they think moſt perfect in our Time; who yet in effect are only whited Sepulchres, in compariſon of the Apoſtles and firſt Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, who had truly a living Faith, whereas theſe are nothing but dead Mens Bones? They muſt, like St. *Paul*, ſuffer themſelves to be overcome by the Light of Faith, and give ear to the Voice of the Lord, who ſpeaketh in our Interiour, ſaying, ‡ *Why perſecuteſt thou me?* We will ſay, that we think we do well to follow the Steps of the Learned Men of our Age; but we deceive our ſelves: For they call themſelves Chriſtians, but are not ſo, being rather of (*h*) the Synagogue of Satan, whoſe Buſineſs it is to deface and deſtroy the Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt. St. *Paul* fell to the Ground; and the Man that would be converted unto God, muſt fall from all the Sciences, Grandeurs and Honors to which he may have been raiſed, and which have ſerved him inſtead of a Horſe to purſue and perſecute Jeſus Chriſt in his true Children, thinking they did well in ſo doing, as St. *Paul* thought when he perſecuted the Chriſtians, being moved to it by his Zeal for the Law. How many Men are there in this Age, learned even in Theology it ſelf, who deſtroy God's Law, pretending to explain it? One that would in Simplicity ſquare his Life by the Letter of the Goſpel, would be contradicted, proſecuted and condemned by them as a Diſturber of the publick Peace, a Seducer of the People, and be rejected by all the Learned. But this is not to be wonder'd at; for they were the Doctors themſelves in Chriſt's Days that condemn'd him to Death. Nor are they now better diſpos'd to bear with the Truth that reproves them: It muſt lurk, and avoid their Power, or they would kill it, as they did the Chriſtians in St. *Paul*'s Days. I queſtion not but God calls often to them in the Ground of their Soul, *Why perſecuteſt thou me?* But the Buſtle of Worldly Affairs makes ſuch a continual Noiſe in their Ears, that they hear not the Voice of God. They want a more intelligible Voice; nor will that be powerful enough; for it is ſaid, (*i*) *That the Light ſhall ſpring out of*

‡ *Acts* ix. 4. (h) *Rev.* iii. 9. (i) *Iſai.* lviii. 10.

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Darkneſs; but that (k) *Men will love Darkneſs more than the Light*, which they will not be willing to receive.

§. 186. Is it not a lamentable Thing, that while God is willing at this time to convert ſeveral Perſons, as he did St. *Paul*, they will not be converted, ſetting a greater Value upon what the World approveth, than upon that which Jeſus Chriſt eſteem'd and recommended both in Deed and Word? Is it not Matter of Grief to live in ſo degenerate an Age, when the Truth is rejected, and Evil ſits Maſter at the Helm? And with all this we think we are well, and that we pleaſe God, not reflecting that we live directly contrary to all the Inſtructions of Chriſt Jeſus! What ſtrange Blindneſs, far ſurpaſſing that of St. *Paul*, who could not diſcern by human Underſtanding, that he was perſecuting Jeſus Chriſt, as we may ſee clearly we do, when we ſeriouſly reflect on our way of Living!

§. 187. It is high time for us to ſay with St. *Paul*, (l) *Lord, what wilt thou have us to do?* But firſt of all we muſt become blind to all our own Knowledge: For Human Science ſtand in Oppoſition to the Wiſdom of the Holy Spirit. The Veſſels of our Souls muſt be empty before God fill them, becauſe he cannot admit of any Mixture. We muſt be *ignorant of all*, before we *know all*. Therefore Chriſt ſays by the Prophet, (m) *I will deſtroy the Wiſdom of the Wiſe, and bring to nothing the Underſtanding of the Prudent*; to ſhew, that there muſt be an End of all Wiſdom before we can receive the Goſpel-Simplicity. This has always been the Method: For the ſimple † People received Jeſus Chriſt, and his Doctrine, and the Wiſe were diſappointed of both; and therefore if we would receive the Holy Spirit, we muſt ſimplifie our ſelves like little Children. This is not that we muſt become Fools, or loſe our Underſtanding; no, but we muſt not any more value our ſelves on our Knowledge, but be as if we knew nothing; and be willing to forget all that belongs to our ſelves, and ſincerely demand, *What wilt thou have me to do?* And then for certain he will ſay unto us, *Read my Goſpel, and it will inform you what ye ought to do*: For it contains the ſame Doctrine which Jeſus Chriſt preach'd and practis'd, and left in Writing for an Everlaſting Memorial. Seeing his Bodily Preſence was not to continue always upon the Earth, he left his Doctrine there; which is his Spouſe, united inſeparably with him; and is all pure, and holy, and unble-

(k) *John* iii. 19. (l) *Acts* ix. 6, &c. (m) *Iſai.* xxix. 14.
† 1 *Cor.* i. 26, &c.

miſh'd;

miſh'd; one with God, which can neither deceive nor err, as they ſhall know, who are willing to give up and captivate their Underſtandings, as St. *Paul* did; loſing even the Sight of the Body, ſo as not any more to regard Earthly, but Divine and Eternal Objects. Nor may we be afraid that thoſe who render themſelves thus blind and ignorant ſhall loſe their Knowledge: For they ſhall obtain more, as St. *Paul* after his Three Days Blindneſs received more Light, both Spiritual and Corporeal, than he had before; ſeeing he was afterwards capable to inſtruct and govern great Numbers of People: For he who quits, or goes out of himſelf, that he may be reſign'd unto God, neither lives nor operates any more himſelf, but Chriſt lives and operates in him and by him, as he operated in his own natural Body, of which his Friends are the Reſemblance, and the true Members of his Myſtical Body.

§. 188. What might not ſuch a Perſon do living upon the Earth? He might be capable to convert the whole World: For God would lead him by the Hand like a little Child, making him firſt beautiful in his Eyes, and then uſeful unto others, not depending on any thing. For though St. *Paul* was tempted after his Converſion, yet it was ſaid to him, (n) *My Grace is ſufficient for thee.* A deſirable State! And yet Men do not truly deſire it; becauſe few do reſign themſelves unto God ſo entirely, as to be willing to diveſt themſelves of all their own Wills, their own Knowledge or Deſire: All which are Things of little or no Value. For what is our Will in reſpect of God's? Ours has no Power, and his can do whatever he pleaſes; and were ours one with his, we ſhould of Courſe obtain whatever we ſhould deſire. And did we think meanly of, and reject our own Knowledge, we ſhould in lieu thereof be endued with the Wiſdom of the Holy Spirit, which comprehends all Things, exceeding all created Knowledge. And did we abandon our own Deſires, we ſhould remain in full Liberty and Contentment. For theſe being united unto God, nothing could fall out contrary unto our Wills, no more than contrary to his, becauſe they are no more Two, but One.

§. 189. Would not this be a pleaſant Life, in Compariſon of what we now live, humoring our own Deſires, which do but torture us Night and Day, without yielding us any true Contentment? For the more we gratifie them, the leſs is our Satisfaction, (o) *The Eye will never be ſatisfied with Seeing,*

(n) 2 *Cor.* xii. 9. (o) *Eccl.* i. 8.

nor

nor the Ear with Hearing; nor will the Heart ever ceaſe to covet that which cannot fill it. Poor diſtracted Creature! Why doſt thou not ſhake off this Yoke, that thou may'ſt enter into the Liberty of the true Children of God? He deſires this. He ſeeks thee. He calls thee. Be not afraid, He will care for thee. Can we imagine a more ſtupid Ignorance, than for Men to be unwilling to ſurrender themſelves as little Children to the Government of God our Father? Muſt not we be riſen to an unaccountable Pitch of Infatuation, that makes us thus cruel to our ſelves, and Enemies unto God? Are we ignorant that he is the Source and Spring of all created Wiſdom, and that all the Knowledge of the Learned that ever were upon Earth, is but a ſmall Ray of that Divine Wiſdom, which he has diſpenſed unto Men according to his Pleaſure, to ſome more, to others leſs, as he would have every one of them proportionably to love him? But the Misfortune is, that inſtead of owning this Dependance upon God, and ſurrendring unto him the abſolute Dominion of our Underſtandings, which in Juſtice belongs to him; we do attribute it to our ſelves, and preſume we know how to govern and manage our ſelves without any other Dependance: Not that we ſpeak this in ſo many Words, but our Actions are irrefragable Evidences of it. For we exert the whole Power of our Souls and Bodies in Proſecution of our Pretenſions, before we have enquir'd of God, to know whether they be pleaſing or diſpleaſing to him. If they pleaſe our ſelves, it is enough to make us endeavour to carry them by Force; and if they ſucceed not according to our Wiſh, it is enough to allarm us into Murmuring and Deſpair, yea, ſometimes to make us charge God with Severity and Injuſtice; while all his Actings are perfect, promoting our great Intereſt and Salvation, tho' the Dulneſs of our Underſtanding enclines us to make a quite contrary Judgment.

§. 190. What Peace, and Joy, and Contentment would not accrue to the Man that were entirely as to his whole Man, and always, and in all Circumſtances, reſign'd as a little Child unto God his Father? He would expect all from him, who is able to fulfil all his Deſire, who has all Power in Heaven and in Earth, who in the Twinkling of an Eye can deſtroy all his Enemies, and give him the Victory over all his Paſſions, and make him more than Conqueror over the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil. Nothing could be wanting to ſuch a Soul ſo reſign'd, and under the Government of God his Father. Yea, in the midſt of Want, and Danger, and Loſſes, he would be united more cloſely to his *only All*. Such is the Happineſs that attends the Man that is reſign'd

unto

unto God, by ſubjecting himſelf in all Things to his Guidance and Conduct. He has in this World Contentment and Joy, living in Peace of Conſcience, fearing nothing, being in full Liberty, as a little Child that's carried ſafely in the Nurſe's Arms, and at Death he paſſes from this Felicity to a greater, which ſhall never end.

Wherefore, my Children, I exhort you to become Children of God, renouncing your Corruption, that ye may be endued with a new Mind, and regenerated in the Spirit of Chriſt Jeſus. It is what I wiſh to you all this Year for your New-Year's-Gift, that you may become new Chriſtians, to the End that our Love to one another in Chriſt may be eternal. This is the Wiſh of her who loves your Eternal Happineſs, and remains

Your very Affectionate,

Jan. 1. 1689.

Anthoinette Bourignon.

The End of the Second Part.

TO THE READER.

Friendly Reader,

I Have been long endeavouring to find out the Reaſon why Men have thus forſaken God, and the Counſels of Chriſt Jeſus, whom Chriſtians do not now obey in any thing; but my Endeavours were all to no Purpoſe, till God gave me to underſtand, that all this is occaſion'd through Mens Ignorance of the Corruption that Sin has introduced into their Nature. They think they are wiſe and good, whereas they are truly fooliſh and ignorant, perverſe and wicked. This is the Reaſon why they are not obedient to the Law of God, nor to the Evangelical Doctrine; namely, that they think themſelves wiſe enough for conducting themſelves; and that they are doing right, when in effect they are ſpoiling and marring all. This makes them preſume to act of themſelves on all Occaſions, and not to regard God's Laws, thinking them below a generous Spirit, ſuch as they take their own to be.

For this they never think of keeping God's Law, and obeying the Evangelical Counſels, hoping to attain Salvation without the Obſervation of 'em; eſpecially ſeeing the Scripture ſays, (a) That a Man is not juſtified by the Law; and that the Law was not given for the Righteous: *All which is very true, for the juſt Man is a Law unto himſelf. Likewiſe God gave no Laws unto Man ſo long as he continued in his righteous and innocent State. It is Sin that has occaſion'd all the Laws, which afterwards became ſo neceſſary, that not any one can be ſaved without them; becauſe Sin has blinded the Soul, and made it inſenſible of its Miſery; which St.* Paul *gives us to underſtand, ſaying,* (b) That if he had not learn'd it from the Law, he could not have known that Covetouſneſs is Sin. *It is the Law then indirectly that ſaves Men, there being (ſince Sin entred) no other Means*

(a) Rom. iii. 28. 1 Tim. i. 9. (b) Rom. vii. 7.

of

of Salvation, but the Obſervation of God's Laws. Not that theſe Laws of themſelves are able to ſave us, but they are Lights, which ſerve to diſcover Sin, and ſhew the Way to ſubdue it, and to recover the Grace of God. And as it is written, (c) He who loves Danger periſhes in it: *So I ſay, that he who does not obſerve God's Laws remains incurable, and ſhall never have the Wound of Sin heal'd, but ſhall die in it, and be damn'd Eternally.*

For this Reaſon we ought to be at ſome Pains to diſcover the Miſery to which Sin has reduced us, and ſee how that God having made Man ſo perfect a Creature, ſo accompliſhed in Soul and Body, full of Wiſdom and Holineſs; he is now grown altogether ſtupid and ignorant, inclined to all kinds of Evil, and expoſed to all ſorts of Miſery, both Bodily and Spiritual, which cannot proceed from God, who is never the Author of any Evil or Imperfection. All theſe Failures and Imperfections muſt needs come from ſome other Cauſe than God; and there being no other that has Power over Man, it muſt have been his own free Will that brought all thoſe Evils upon himſelf. For neither Angel nor Devil can lay any Hold on Man, but only ſo far as his Free-will conſents, and neither more nor leſs. Which being ſuppoſed to be true, Man muſt ſee that himſelf has been the Cauſe of all the Bodily and Spiritual Evils that he labours under; and that God being willing to preſerve Man's Liberty, could not hinder him to do Evil. When his Free-will went about to do Evil, God muſt ſuffer it to act as it pleaſed: And when Adam *turn'd away his Heart from God, for whom it was created, that he might love the Terreſtrial Creatures, God manifeſted his Compaſſion, by converſing ſtill with* Adam, *that he might reclaim him to his Love: But all in vain, inaſmuch as* Adam's *Free-will inclin'd ſtill more towards the Creatures, and withdrew from the Love which it owed unto God; till after it had fall'n from Sin to Sin, God recall'd Man, ſaying,* (d) Adam, where art thou? *To the End he might come to himſelf, and conſider how he had fall'n from a State of Felicity into one of Miſery out of his own Free-will, and contrary to the Will of God, who would have been pleaſed to ſee Man always glorious: As indeed God would yet be well pleaſed to ſee Men return from their own Wills unto him, and recover that State of glorious Innocence wherein he created them all in* Adam.

This is what Men might recover, were they but reſolved effectually to embrace the Means that God has offered them, ſeeing Man ſhall enjoy his Free-will and Liberty during this whole Life, yea to all Eternity; and ſhall have it in his Power to return to the Love of God ſo long as he lives in this World. But the Mi-

(c) Eccleſ. iii. 26. (d) Gen. iii. 9.

ſery

ſery is, that Men will not uſe the true and proper Means for recovering this Love of God, that was loſt by their own Sins, but will perſevere in theſe, and withal hope for Salvation by another Way, without uſing any Diligence of their own. In this lies their capital Miſtake; namely, that they think that the Love of God, which has been abandon'd by their free and unconſtrain'd Will, can be recovered again without this ſame Free-will; and that God, contrary to his Decree of preſerving Man's Liberty, will after Sin force Men to do well, or ſave them by another's Merits. No, God is not changeable or inconſtant, to change his Decrees like Men, who do that one Day which they diſprove and repent of the next. God cannot repent of any thing. It is his Pleaſure to have Man a free Creature, who cannot be ſaved againſt his own Will. Nor may we ſay, that this comes from want of Power in God: For his Omnipotence appears as much in not willing any thing as in willing it; and it not having been his Will that Man ſhould be forced unto any thing, Man ſhall remain free for ever.

Some may here put the Queſtion: If it be ſo that Mens Liberty is preſerved to them in Hell, may not the Damned be converted? I anſwer, No, no more than the Bleſſed can ſin any more after Death: Not that their Free-will is in the leaſt taken from them on God's Part; but becauſe the depraved Free-will of the Damned will not repent, for the habitual Inclination it has to Evil; wherein the Will is reſolved to perſevere, and therefore cannot be converted, becauſe it will not. Theſe damned Souls rather give themſelves up to an enraged Penitence, blaſpheming againſt God, curſing the Hour of their Creation, and every thing that has aſſiſted and contributed to their Damnation; and thus do they dwell for ever in the Obſtinacy of their Sins. The Caſe is the ſame with Sorcerers, who ſay, they cannot turn, though they are ſtill alive, and have the Opportunity of Repentance; but they cannot, becauſe they will not quit that damnable Commerce that they have with the Devil, which of their own Free-will and Choice they delight in. I have taken Pains upon divers ſuch Perſons, thinking to bring them back to God, becauſe they diſcovered great Signs of Repentance: But after all my Endeavours, and their apparent Repentance, they concluded, that they would not quit the Senſualities, which they had with the Devil, by reaſon of the Habit they had already ſo long lived in. Which ſeems to me to be a true Emblem of the damned Souls, who would not be converted, though it were in their Power; becauſe of their own free Choice they delight in the Evil to which they are accuſtom'd. Which God cannot hinder, conſidering his Decree of preſerving Man's Liberty. It is becauſe of this Liberty alſo, that the Souls

of

of the Bleſſed cannot after Death ſin any more, becauſe they will not; being habituated unto Good, they do of their own Free-will and Choice perſevere in it for ever; and this is confirm'd in Grace, that they may not any more have either the Will or Power to ſin, becauſe their Will is ſubmitted to the Will of God, who can never do Evil, nor ſuffer the Soul that is ſubjected unto him to fall into Sin. Thus do all the Souls of the Bleſſed, after their Deceaſe, remain eternally impeccable, notwithſtanding the Freedom of their Wills, which cannot decline to Evil, no more than the Souls of the Damned can be converted unto Good.

But Man's Ignorance and Stupidity is become ſo great by reaſon of Sin, that he comprehendeth not the Works of God, though many of them may be reach'd by our groſs and natural Judgment: For we ſee with our Eyes, and hear with our Ears, and can feel and perceive the Infirmities and Miſeries that Man labours under: and they who believe the Scriptures know, that before the Creation God ſaid, (e) Let us make Man in our own Likeneſs: *Now we may eaſily judge, that all theſe Miſeries and Infirmities that are in Man bear no Reſemblance to God; and that as for certain there is now ſomething more in Man, than what is of God's Creation, inaſmuch as there is no Evil to be found in God, who being the Spring, and Source, and Quinteſſence of all Good, could not have been the Author of any Evil; and that all the Evils that Man feels in himſelf muſt needs proceed from another Cauſe than God; for he could not make any thing that's evil. Yet we ſee that almoſt all Men are now in the Belief, that God made Man ſuch as we ſee and know him. Were this true, we might well conclude, that he muſt be a miſerable God, whoſe Reſemblance we bear.*

How is it poſſible that ſo many, who reckon themſelves Men of good Judgment, do not diſcover, that we are not made for this preſent Life; and that God muſt needs have created for us a Soul and Body more perfect than that we now ſee and touch; and that this Body of Divine Workmanſhip muſt needs be perfect; and fair, or finiſhed without any Infirmity or Defect; and that the Spirit thereof ought to be filled with Divine Knowledge and Wiſdom to qualifie it for Converſe with God? But becauſe Men ſee not this internal Body, they conclude they have none other but this viſible Corruption. Which is a great Miſtake, and makes us to love this Corruption, as if it were God's Workmanſhip; yea, as if it were to be raiſed up again after Death. This makes us eſteem our Fleſh, and pamper it, and ſtudy its Eaſe and Pleaſure: But had we comprehended the Truth, we ſhould know that

(e) Gen. i.

this

this Body and Fleſh which we ſee and touch, is no more but a Corruption or Leproſy, which Sin has brought over the Body that God created for us; and that this Corruption alone is the cauſe of all the Maladies and Infirmities that we groan under during this Life, and of Death at laſt; ſeeing God did not create Death, but Sin only hath engendred all the Evils that we ſee, and are ſenſible of in Nature. If the Dog bites, or the Wolf deſtroys; if the Fire burns, and the Water drowns; and if the Air annoys us with evil and infectious Vapours; all theſe are occaſion'd by Sin. Hunger and Thirſt, and exceſs of Heat or Cold; our many Labours and Toils, come all of Sin; nor is there any Malady or Infirmity either in the Soul or Body but what ſprings from Sin.

And hence it comes that we have no reaſon to pamper this our corruptible Fleſh as we do, which produces nothing but Sin. It is for this that Jeſus Chriſt repeats ſo often, and ſays, (f) Deny your ſelves; *becauſe without this* Denial *no Man can be ſaved: For this Corruption cannot poſſibly enter into Paradiſe; becauſe into that place not any thing that's unclean can enter. A Man muſt have renounc'd and overcome his Corruption in this World, before he can be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven. It were good that Men underſtood this, ſeeing this Corruption is God's Enemy, which has ſpoil'd and corrupted all his perfect Works, and covered over Man's Body, that was ſo Tranſparent, and Agile, and Subtile, and Luminous, with the Infamous Sack-cloth of Miſery and Sin, which God greatly abhors; would he then receive that which he utterly abhors, or his ſworn Enemy, into his Kingdom? We are deceiv'd if we believe it, and it is great folly to look for it, ſince it will never be ſeen that one Man ſhall be ſaved who has not firſt renounc'd and ſubdu'd his Corrupt Nature wherein he was born into this World. And if at his Death, he has not ſubdu'd this Corruption, he Dies the Enemy of God as he was born, and has aſſign'd him for his Portion all the Evils that Sin has brought into his Nature. This makes up his Hell, which he ſhall ſuffer to all Eternity, becauſe he Died out of the Favour of the Eternal God: For the Soul and the Body that God Created, ſhall Live Eternally, as ſhall likewiſe all the other Creatures; the Works of an Eternal God, being all Eternal; as Man Lives well or not in this World, ſo ſhall it fare with him Eternally.*

Is it not then a great folly in Man to conſume his time, while in this World, in pampering his Corruption, by miniſtring to its eaſe, and pleaſure, and ſatisfaction, for ſo ſhort a time as is the duration of this Life, and by this means come ſhort of a bleſſed Eternal Life; and for the ſake of theſe little ſhort liv'd Pleaſures, bring

(f) *Matth.* xvi. 24. *Mark* viii. 35. *Luke* ix. 23.

upon himself Torments that shall never end? How stupid is Man, and how cruel to his glorious Soul and Body, to make them eternally Miserable, for the enjoyment of the Pleasures of this Life, which give no Satisfaction nor perfect Contentment, but are often found to be the causes of Misery and Vexation, Distress and Anxiety, and Remorse of Conscience even in the midst of these imaginary Pleasures? But were there nothing of all this, were these Pleasures solid and real, yet there would be no proportion between them and Eternal Pleasures; the least Celestial Pleasure being more Joyous than all the imaginary Pleasures of this World together. Notwithstanding we see Men prefer these to the Eternal Pleasures, because they do not apply themselves to the Consideration of what they are, what they have been, and what they shall be: They amuse themselves with the Trifles of this Life, tho' they see that in effect all Men after they have made some stay in this World, come at last to Die, some sooner some later; but none escape, be they Rich or Poor, Great or Little, all are equally Tributary unto Death: For all that is born must die. This is daily before our Eyes, and yet we are not affected with this necessity of Dying, and carrying nothing with us when we Die. All the Pains we have taken to get Honour, and Wealth, and Pleasure, is labour lost; and we often see Men rising to Estates and Dignities, taken away before they come to enjoy them; or sometimes in the very midst of their Enjoyments, and Affluence, and Triumph, leaving all to the Earth with afflicting regrets, that they must now quit all when Fortune smiles upon them, and sooths them with a favourable Gale. Their poor Souls feel much Anguish and Trouble; being so agitated with divers Cares, that they have no leisure to think of Eternal Happiness, nor of the Damnation they are launching out into: Thus distracted and divided from their true Good. The Merchants, Lawyers, Doctors, and Clergy, keep all the same Road, applying themselves every one to their Business, their Office, or Benefice, as to their last end; laying out all their Cares and Studies, the labours of their Bodies, and industry of their Minds, upon these. Finally, all that God has given unto Men, is now laid out in getting Money, or the Honours and Pleasures of this World; tho' they frequently see their Brother suddenly taken away in the midst of his Prosperity, from all his Gold and Silver, that were not capable to prolong his Life one moment. By this we may clearly see the Vanity of all things under the Sun, which bring Vexation and Trouble to us while we Live, and are of no use when we come to Die.

Must we not from all this pronounce Man foolish and insensible, who goes about to establish himself in this World as the Place of his abode, whither he is only sent as to a place of Exile and Penitence,

tence, where he is to ſtrive to recover the Love of God that we have loſt in Adam *through his Sin, and which we may recover through the Miſeries of this Life? If our Soul continues Faithful to God, as to its own particular,* Adam's *Sin can neither deſtroy, nor damn it; and if Man after he has attain'd to the uſe of his Reaſon continue in the Love of God, he ſhould quietly paſs thro' this Miſerable Life in the Love of God, and Die in his Favour, and go thence to be more intimately united with his God for ever. But every Man's own Sins have ſet him at a greater diſtance from God, than the Sin of* Adam *has done. Wherefore it is abſolutely neceſſary that the particular Perſon who hath Sinned, do voluntarily of his own Free-Will forſake his Sin, and embrace the Penitence that is enjoyn'd during this time of Trial, otherwiſe he ſhall never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; ſeeing it is abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, that one Die in the Love of God, and Man has no other Buſineſs in this World, but only to labour to recover the Love of his God. If he does not compaſs this End, he is loſt for ever, and ſhall have no other time, wherein to perform ſaving Penitence, but this ſhort Life; for* (g) after Death there is no Remiſſion. In what State ſoever a Man Dies, in that ſhall he dwell Eternally.

Yet I would not have you, Dear Reader, to think that there is not after Death a time of Purgation, which ſhall laſt as long as this corruptible World. Mind not thoſe Scorners, who ſay there is no State of Purification after Death. We may ſee it plainly neceſſary that there ſhould be a State of Purgation after this Life, otherwiſe it were to be fear'd that not ſo much as one Soul could be Saved: For who is there that liveth, and is not defiled with ſome Sin; and as the Scripture ſays, (h) He who ſays he has no Sin, is a Lyar? *Muſt all that have Sinn'd then, after they have attain'd to the uſe of their Reaſon, be Damned? By no means, ſince God ſays,* (i) He deſires not the Death of a Sinner, but would have him to Repent and Live, *which is a ſign that he will ſave Sinners that are Converted; having himſelf declar'd,* That he deals by the Sinner after he is Converted, (k) as if he had never offended. *This is enough to let us ſee that God ſaves Sinners, and excludes not from Paradiſe all that have offended; tho' elſewhere he ſays,* No unclean thing ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven (†), *Which two ſayings could not be reconcil'd if there were not after Death ſome time of Purgation, ſeeing no Man Dies in ſo pure a State, as that he may paſs directly to the Enjoyment of God after his Death. All muſt be purged before they be admitted into Paradiſe.*

(g) *Eccl.* xi. 3. (h) 1 *Joh.* i. 8. (i) *Ezek.* xxxiii. 11. (k) *Ibid.* 12, 13, &c. (†) *Rev.* xxi. 27.

And this Purgation is performed by means of the privation of the Vision of God: For one that Dies in his Love, cannot ſuffer a greater Torment than to be deprived of his Company whom he Loveth. If a Lover or Spouſe ſuffers ſo much from the Abſence of his Miſtriſs or Wife, whom he paſſionately deſires to be with, and cannot; how much more muſt the Soul that Loves God, be afflicted and tortur'd when it is not admitted unto God after Death; becauſe of its paſt Sins? This is unto it truly and properly a fire of Contrition, which rends its very Bowels, and enflames it with ardent deſires of Union with him whom it loveth, which notwithſtanding cannot be effected until it be wholly purified and cleans'd from its Pollutions, as it will be by the long or ſhort privation of that which it Loveth: For this Purgatory, or Purgative Life, is not beſtowed equally upon all that are Dead in the Grace of God, but unto every Man after his Demerits. He who has Sinned moſt, is ſubjected to a longer Penitence than he that has Sinned leaſt. Herein is ſtrict Juſtice and no Partiality, (l) Every one receives according to his Work.

I ſpeak not here of the Damned or Saved, who ſhall receive every one of them according to their Works in full perfection, but of thoſe who Die in the Grace of God, before they have given full Satisfaction in this World; theſe Perſons who while in this World did ſometimes Love God, ſometimes themſelves, or created Objects: If ſuch Die while they are actually in the Love of themſelves, there remains no more Purgatory for them, their Sentence of Damnation is pronounc'd upon their Death without any Remiſſion: whereas ſuch of theſe imperfect Souls as die in the Favour of God have yet hopes of Salvation, after they have given full Satisfaction to the Juſtice of God, by the privation of Union with him; which to them is a more ſenſible Affliction, than all the imaginable Torments of this Life: For when the Soul is gone out of this mortal Body, it is much more ſubtile and penetrating, than when it is cloath'd with its mortality, and has a brighter view of the Eternal Good and Happineſs there is in God's Preſence. Therefore is it extremely afflicted and oppreſs'd with Grief, to ſee it ſelf deprived of ſo much Good, for having delighted in things ſo contemptible as are all that is in this World: For as far as a Soul ſhall have delighted in the Pleaſures of this Life, ſo far ſhall it be oblig'd to be depriv'd of the Viſion of God. Seeing as long as it has continued in the Love of the Creatures, ſo long has it liv'd in Sin, acting contrary to God's deſigns upon it, (which were) that he might delight himſelf in it, having created it only for his Love, ſo as it cannot ſet its Affection upon any other thing beſides God,

(l) Prov. xxiv. 12. Matth. xvi. 27.

without

without highly offending its Creator, who requires the whole Heart of Man, entire, and undivided, and without mixture.

And there is no other Sin, but that of withdrawing our Affections from God, that we may ſet them upon ſome other thing beſides him. However, there may be divers names to Sins; the Eſſence thereof is no other but the withdrawing our Affections from God, to ſettle them in ſomething that is not God. Some ſet them on Riches, which Men call the Sin of Avarice. *Some in Worldly Honour and Glory, which is call'd the Sin of* Pride. *Some love Eating and Drinking delicately, which we call* Gluttony. *Others love the Pleaſures of the Fleſh, which we call by the name of* Luxury. *And ſo in all other Sins, which before Men are call'd by different names, tho' before God Sin is but one thing Eſſentially; namely, the withdrawing our Affections from God, that we may ſet them upon ſome other thing that is not God, whether that be our Eaſe, or Wit, or Beauty, or any other thing that regards Self-love. Wherefore the Man that Dies in any Affection out of God, is Damned; becauſe he Dies out of his Favour: But he that Dies in God's Love, after he has ſeveral times liv'd out of that Love, ought after Death to be as long deprived of the Viſion of God, as he has Lived in this World out of the Love of God, unleſs the Perſon has been ſo Contrite and Penitent in this Life, as to have his Sins Pardoned before he Dies.*

This is what I would willingly inculcate into the Hearts of all well-meaning Men, to the end they may reſolve to embrace the Evangelical Life, that they ſuffer the Pains that are due to their Sins in this World, rather than to have them to endure after Death. Friendly Reader, my deſign in this Third Part *is to ſhew thee more particularly what an* Evangelical Life *is; what the Corruption that Sin has brought upon Man is; and how neceſſary it is for one that would be Saved to ſubdue this Corruption before he Dies. Ponder this well, my Dear Reader, while I Pray that God would fill Thee with his Holy Spirit.*

Anthoinette Bourignon.

BE not Deceived, God is not mocked: For whatſoever a Man Soweth, that ſhall he alſo Reap. He that Soweth to his Fleſh, ſhall of the Fleſh reap Corruption; but he that Soweth to the Spirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap Life Everlaſting. *Gal.* 6. 7, 8.

They that are after the Fleſh, do mind the things of the Fleſh: But they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit: For to be Carnally minded, (or the minding of the Fleſh) is Death; but to be Spiritually minded, is Life and Peace: Becauſe the Carnal Mind is Enmity againſt God; for it is not ſubject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the Fleſh, cannot pleaſe God. But ye are not in the Fleſh, but in the Spirit, if ſo be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any Man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his. *Rom.* 8. 5, 6, &c.

The Truth, as it is in Jeſus, teacheth; that ye put off (concerning the former Converſation) the Old Man, which is Corrupt according to the Deceitful Luſts; and be renewed in the Spirit of your Mind: And that ye put on the New Man, which after God is Created in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs. *Eph.* 4. 21, 22, &c.

THE RENOVATION OF The GOSPEL-SPIRIT.

The Third Part.

I.

Of the Perverſeneſs of Corruption.

§. 1. I HOPE, my Children, ye have ſeen by the *Firſt and Second Parts of the Renovation of the Goſpel Spirit*, how Sin has brought on *Corruption* upon Men, as upon all the Creatures; and that we muſt of neceſſity reſiſt this Corruption if we would be ſaved. Ye are now to learn how ye are to reſiſt this *Corruption*, and the way to Live an *Evangelical Life*, ſeeing Eternal Happineſs depends upon this Practice.

§. 2. Ye muſt in the firſt place, and as a foundation of all, acknowledge that Sin has Corrupted Man's Soul and Body entirely, and that ever ſince this Sin entred into Man, nothing proceeds from him, but Evil and Sins: And conſequently that one cannot in any thing obey *the inclinations of Nature*, but he muſt do Evil. This is the continual Warfare the Scripture ſpeaks of, ſaying, (a) *That our Life is a continual Warfare*, ſeeing one that would be, or become a Chriſtian, ought continually to ſtrive and war againſt the Inclinations of this *Corrupt Nature*; otherwiſe, if he does not, he lives in continual Sin, and every moment encreaſes the Pains of his Hell,

(a) Job vii. 1.

ſeeing there is not one Action or Word iſſuing from the Inclinations of *corrupt Nature*, but what is Sin.

§. 3. This, if well conſider'd by one that deſires to become a Chriſtian, will make him afraid of giving way to this *corrupt Nature*, and forward to oppoſe it in every thing: ſeeing in truth he has not a greater Enemy than his Corruption. For the Devil, the Enemy of our Souls has no Power over them, but only ſo far as our Free-will gives Conſent. Nor muſt we be afraid of Men, ſince the Scripture ſays (*b*), *Fear not them that can only kill the Body, but fear them that can ſend the Soul to Hell*; which makes it appear, that we are to fear nothing but the Motions of our Corruption: For if we humour them, we certainly go to Hell. Seeing (*c*) *we are by Nature Children of Wrath* and Damnation, from which we cannot be ſaved, but by warring againſt, and oppoſing this Corruption. And none can ever be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven, before he has entirely abjur'd and conquer'd this *Corruption*, ſeeing it is the Enemy of God, and the Source of all Evil.

§. 4. If ye have yet any Scruple as to theſe Truths, My Children, do but ſoberly examine all your Words, and ye will find, if ye deal impartially, that they are all Evil; ye will ſee that your Aims are only for earthly things, and that ye are pleas'd only in what delights the Senſes; that ye labour only for Time, and have all your Affections employ'd for the Eaſe and Satisfaction of your *Corruption*; all this is Sin before God. For as long as our Affections are withdrawn from God, we are living all the time in Sin; ſeeing he created us only to love him, our Affections ſhould not be one Moment ſet upon any thing beſides him.

§. 5. But the Miſery is, that Men do not conſider theſe things, but live in neglect of their Salvation, without reflecting upon Eternity; they ſpend their Lives among the vain and tranſient Amuſements of this miſerable World, which are of no Uſe to them at their Death: They carry as little away with them when they die, as they brought in with them when they were born. This makes their Cares, and Labours, and Affections vain and ſuperfluous, when they muſt leave all to the Earth, and cannot carry any thing away with them, but ſenſible regrets for having thus ſpent their Lives out of the Love of God, who therefore thruſts them far from him, and it is but reaſon. For it is indecent for an Inferiour to riſe up againſt his Superiour, directly counteracting his Deſigns

(b) *Matth.* x. 28. (c) *Epheſ.* ii. 3.

and

and Will. Did our hired Servant behave himſelf thus, acting directly contrary to his Maſter's Will and Command, we would undoubtedly turn him away; and ſhall not God with greater reaſon baniſh Man far from him? Man, who being made by God that he might delight himſelf with him, doth preſume to delight himſelf in other things beſides God; ſome in carnal Pleaſures, ſome in Eating and Drinking; ſome in getting to themſelves Honour and Obedience, and other ſuch like vain and tranſient things, in Contempt of the Affection which they owe unto God alone? This is what Men do not enough conſider, not knowing either the *Corruption* that Sin has brought into their Nature, or the End for which they were created, or what becomes of them after this Life. Their Blindneſs and Ignorance in theſe things makes them neglect, yea, forget their Eternal Happineſs, ſo as they periſh eternally without Remiſſion.

§. 6. Wherefore I do invite all the Children of God, not to conform to this World, nor to go to School to Men, who teach them to diſpute and diſſemble, to cover and indulge their Sins, but to go to School to Jeſus Chriſt, where we are taught by the Wiſdom of God, that the only End of our Creation is to love him; that Sin has ſo far corrupted Man, that he is not able to do any Good, nor has he any other way to be ſaved but by renouncing this Corruption, and oppoſing it in every particular. This is what Jeſus Chriſt ſo often repreſents to us in his Goſpel, ſaying (*d*) *Except a Man deny himſelf, he cannot be my Diſciple*, &c. And yet now we ſee Men doing the quite contrary, loving themſelves, indulging and pampering the Corruption of all their Affections, procuring unto it all the Eaſe and Pleaſure that's in their Power, and growing at laſt into a kind of Idolatry of it, make it their whole buſineſs to provide for it, to pamper and pleaſe it.

§. 7. And we find the greater part of Mankind now in this State, which the Scripture declares, ſaying (*e*), *No Man hateth his own Fleſh*; as if it would admoniſh us, that none hate, this Corruption. Nor do any ſubdue it, that they may be regenerated in the Spirit of Chriſt Jeſus, which nevertheleſs muſt be done before they be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven; tho' Men dive not ſufficiently into this matter, nor think that they are living in Sin as long as their Affections are withdrawn from God; and far leſs do they think of being reprobated, if they die in their Self-love. All this comes by Mens

(d) *Luke* ix. 23. xiv. 26. (*e*) *Epheſ.* v. 29.

applying

applying their Minds wholly to the Cares of this Life, and not to Eternity, neglecting the Principal, that they may cleave to that which is only accidental, they paſs their whole Life thus, without any regard to their Salvation. For did they but once ſeriouſly reflect upon their internal State, they would find, that all their Words and Actions are ſinful; for by enquiring into the whole Courſe of their Lives, they would diſcover that the Drift of all has been Self-love; and that the whole of their Actions and Diſcourſes has been mix'd with ſecret Reſearches of their own Glory, or Intereſt, or Eaſe, or Convenience, or ſome other temporal Advantage; and that they have never done any thing purely for the Love of God, and for no human Conſideration. For it is not poſſible for *Corruption* to produce any real Good: becauſe (*f*) *every true Good cometh from God, the Father of Lights*; and there cannot be any true Good in Man, but what God worketh in him after Man has freely reſign'd his Liberty unto God; then does God operate in ſuch a Perſon all the Good that he asks of him, and nothing but this is truly Good in Man.

§. 8. I know Men think many things, many human Actions and Words, to be good; as their Prayers, Faſtings, and charitable Diſtributions to the Poor; but all theſe things may very well be ſaid to be Sins when they iſſue from the motions of *corrupt Nature*. It is in this that God ſays (*g*), *He will examine and condemn our Righteouſneſs*. For tho' all theſe and other ſuch like Vertues may appear good to Men, yet may they be rejected by the Righteouſneſs of God, who (*h*) *tries the Reins*, and enquires into the Motives of Conſciences, and judges whether theſe Works are not accompanied with Self-love, or private Intereſt; whether we do not ſeek our ſelves in them, or are not mov'd by human Conſiderations, or our own private Satisfaction. This is what Men cannot paſs Sentence upon, as being hidden and interior Sins; but if the Perſon himſelf would take a near Proſpect of all his own Words and Actions, he would ſurely find them all defiled with Sin and Self-ſeeking. For when we ſpeak, we do it either that we may Praiſe our ſelves, or Excuſe our Failings, or impoſe upon our Neighbour, or that we may come by ſome other private Advantage. And if we Traffick, or plead, or apply our ſelves to any other Office or Charge, it is all for our own private Intereſt. If we Labour, or Travel, or do any other thing whatſoever, all is with a View to our

(f) *Jam.* i. 17. (g) *Pſ.* lxxv. 2. *Vulg.* (h) *Pſal.* vii. 9. *Rev.* ii. 23.

Gain,

Gain, and proceeds of Covetouſneſs; ſetting aſide which Advantages Men would not do any thing either in the Spiritual or Temporal; for none will Act or Speak any thing, if he foreſees not in it ſome Advantages mix'd even with his moſt Pious Deſigns themſelves. Wherefore God is not bound to give Man Paradiſe for Loving and Humouring himſelf, but only if he Loves God, and anſwers the deſign that God had in Creating Man, for this only end that he might be beloved of him.

§. 9. Many think they Love God, when there is nothing like it, and their Love is only to themſelves. So much are Men now Blinded in their Underſtandings, that they are ignorant of the State of their own Souls, and promiſe themſelves Peace and Aſſurance in the midſt of the greateſt Danger. For what greater Danger can a Soul be in, than to find it ſelf at the Hour of Death ſtill wedded to its Self-love, and cloathed with the old Rags of its Corruption? With what Shame and Confuſion will it dare to appear before God, covered with the Leproſie of Corruption, and carrying the Arms of his Enemy, which are all the Actions that it has done in this Life for the Pleaſure and Satisfaction of its Corruption; inſtead of Pleaſing God, who had made it for himſelf, and deſign'd it ſhould be Eternally happy? Of which happineſs ſeeing it is now deprived, where ſhall this Poor Soul go, but to the Corruption which has been all along ſo much the Object of its Love, and Affection, and Care? Alas! what reward can this Corruption return unto the Soul for all its Love, ſeeing it has nothing, nor can it do any thing, but return to Corruption, and be reduced to Aſhes, and afterwards to the nothing out of which it was taken? This is the Object of their Love, who have during this Life ſet themſelves to pleaſe their corruptible Fleſh; this is all the return it can make to the Bodies or Souls of thoſe that have been ſo careful to pleaſe it. Eternal Pain and Anguiſh ſhall be the Inheritance of all thoſe who ſhall thus have pampered the Mortal Body in this World.

II.

Man's Liberty to comply with it or not.

§. 10. THat which they have lov'd in this Life goes to *nothing*, out of which it ſprang; but the Internal Soul and Body which God hath Created, cannot be annihilated, ſeeing the

Works

Works of an Eternal God, are all likewiſe Eternal, and ſhall have no End. If God has given it a Being, it muſt have an Eternal Duration in a happy or miſerable Life, as it has determin'd it ſelf by the Free-will which God was pleas'd to beſtow upon it. And it determines it ſelf to a Life of Eternal Felicity, by ſubjecting it ſelf unto the divine Government during this ſhort Life, by willingly reſigning unto God the Free-will which he has given it, and renouncing its own Will, which is always, and in all Particulars, Evil, and cannot do any thing that's good, ſeeing all good comes abſolutely from God, who is the Father of Lights, Righteouſneſs, Truth, and all ſorts of Perfection and Virtue; ſo as no Man is able to do any good, if God does not work it in him.

§. 11. And God will not work this Good in any Perſon, who does not give up himſelf entirely unto God's Will, renouncing himſelf and his *corrupt Nature*. For neither God nor the Devil can conſtrain any Man to do Evil. Man muſt needs chuſe what he would have freely, and without Conſtraint; ſeeing God has been pleas'd to leave him this Liberty, he will by no means interrupt it. Tho' there is nothing impoſſible to his Power, yet does he never deſtroy the Works of his own Hands, nor change what himſelf has once decreed. He has hitherto, and will always leave Man the Enjoyment of that Liberty, which he has once beſtowed upon him. So that by the means of this Liberty Man may freely chuſe the Life of Eternal Happineſs, or that of eternal Miſery; which laſt the Soul fixes upon when it reſolves to follow the Motions of *corrupt Nature*, and to Love the Conveniencies and Pleaſures of this mortal Life. And if it puts this Reſolution in Practice, during this mortal Life, then for certain it goes from hence into the Life of Eternal Miſery, carrying the Sentence of Damnation along with it at Death, which is irrevocable and without Appeal; becauſe the Soul has Damned it ſelf by chuſing this tranſient and mortal Life for its Paradiſe and place of Delight, therefore it cannot pretend to any other. For with what Juſtice could God give his Eternal Paradiſe unto Men, that have had no mind to ſeek for it, after God himſelf has ſaid (*i*) *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of Heaven, and my Righteouſneſs, and all other things ſhall be given unto you?* Theſe Ill-adviſed Souls have Labour'd all their Days for the *other things* inſtead of *the Kingdom of Heaven*; they have laid out all the Strength of their Bodies, and the induſtry of their Minds, in getting Money,

(i) *Matth.* vi. 23.

and

and acquiring the Pleaſures and Honors of this mortal Life, that they may have wherewith to pleaſe, and pamper, and ſatiate the Corruption of their Fleſh.

§. 12. For who does not ſee, that generally all Men now-a-days labor for the Goods of this Life, and that there be very few who ſeek for the Kingdom of Heaven? Men would wonder to ſee one do any thing purely for the Kingdom of Heaven. They would judge it Folly. This I know from my own Experience: For when I abandon'd the Pleaſures of the World, that I might apply my ſelf to the Aſſiſtance of my Neighbour, inſtructing the Ignorant, miniſtring to the Sick, and comforting the Afflicted, all my Relations ſuſpected me of Folly, becauſe I had it in my Power to live at my Eaſe upon what God had given me, and yet troubled my ſelf with Perſons that I had no Concern in, and from whom I could reap no Advantage. Thus do thoſe who have blindly choſen their Paradiſe in this World, deſpiſe them that ſeek firſt the Kingdom of Heaven and the Righteouſneſs thereof, becauſe they ſet a greater Price upon the Goods and Pleaſures of this Life, than on thoſe that are Eternal. Theſe Perſons, I ſay, ſet light by the Charity and Lowlineſs of Jeſus Chriſt, and neither value nor ſeek for the Kingdom of Heaven; becauſe they are contented with the Kingdom of this mortal Life, which muſt quickly periſh, and in which they can never find perfect Contentment or Satisfaction; though they enjoy'd all imaginary Pleaſures, yet neither are they, nor can they be ſatisfied with them, ſeeing their Souls and their Spiritual Bodies cannot be ſatisfied but in God alone, who made them only for himſelf.

§. 13. Men may well amuſe themſelves with the imaginary Pleaſures of this Life, but never have compleat Contentment in them; nor have I ever known any Perſon perfectly content or ſatisfied in this World; but that they were always aſpiring after what they had not. 'Tis a poor Paradiſe that they have choſen, who ſeek their Pleaſure in this World, by obeying the Motions of their *corrupt Nature*, which is God's ſworn Enemy, as having offended him, and oppoſed the Deſign he had in creating Men only that he might be loved of his Creatures; though this Creature has voluntarily turn'd away his Love from God to place it upon himſelf, yea, upon *Evil* and *Corruption*, which in effect he loves more than God; doing all that's in his Power to pleaſe and ſatisfie this filthy Monſter, which has both loſt him the Kingdom of Heaven, and made him obnoxious to the Suffering of Eternal Torments. In which it is highly criminal, and merits nothing from

from us but Hatred, Contradiction, and Oppoſition, as being our Soul's greateſt Enemy, which we ought always to ſtrive againſt: For this ſays the Apoſtle, *Our Life is a continual Warfare.*



III.

The Neceſſity of reſolving to oppoſe it.

§. 14. THus the true Chriſtian, as ſoon as he comes to the Uſe of Reaſon, ought forthwith to take his Weapons in his Hand to combat and conquer this *corrupt Nature*, which alone is powerful enough to work our Damnation, if we ſuffer it to act and reign in us. We are not to think that God will ever damn any Perſon, ſeeing he cannot, becauſe † *he delights not in the Death of a Sinner.* There is nothing but Sin alone that is able to damn Man; for without Sin there's no Damnation. *Adam* our Firſt Parent damn'd himſelf by his Sin; and ſeeing all Men were then in his Loins, he brought them all under a general Condemnation with himſelf, ſo that all that come into this World are in a State of Damnation, none excepted. All Men are from their Nativity Sinners and Enemies to God, as being conceiv'd and born in Sin, and equally obnoxious unto Hell through the Sin of *Adam*; and they all continue in this State of Damnation until every one for himſelf, diſcovering his own Miſery and Damnation, does freely chuſe to withdraw from it, abjuring Sin, and every Inclination to it; that by this means he may be ſet free from the Slavery of Satan, wherein Sin had engaged him, and reſtored unto God, the Author of his Being. Theſe are the Perſons that ſhall be ſaved only, and none but theſe: Damnation is not to be done away, but by him that has brought it upon himſelf; and Sin having been the Cauſe of his Damnation, nothing but the abſtaining from Sin, and the Hatred of it, can ſave the Man from Damnation. For God is not able (ſeeing he is not willing) to ſave Man without his own Co-operation; becauſe Man damned himſelf without God, who is always unwilling to damn or deſtroy him, whom he had been pleaſed to create for his own Delights. It was ever, and always will be his Pleaſure, that Man ſave himſelf; but Man's rebellious Will damns it ſelf, contrary to the Deſigns that God had upon it.

† *Ezek.* xxxiii. 11.

§. 15.

§. 15. Wherefore this rebellious Will muſt needs be ſubmitted unto God's Will before we can recover our Salvation: For otherwiſe Man is damn'd from his very Conception, as being conceiv'd in Sin, and thereby corrupted from his very Nativity; which *Corruption* is not to be cured, if the Man himſelf does not cut off this Corruption, which Sin has occaſion'd in the Work of God. 'Tis as if ye ſuffer'd a Putrifaction to grow upon ſound Fleſh, the Corruption would always encreaſe, if nothing were done to put a Stop to it, until the Worms had finally conſumed the whole. But if this Fleſh is carefully look'd after in the Beginning, and that which is corrupted taken away from that which is good and ſound, it may be yet uſeful for the Nouriſhment of Man. So fares it in like manner with the *Corruption* of the Soul of Man, which is originally deprav'd and corrupted by *Adam*'s Sin, as may be eaſily collected from the Inclination to Evil that is to be ſeen in the Nature even of Children. Now if we (when we are come to the Uſe of Reaſon, ſo as we perceive it) ſet about the Retrenching this Corruption, and purging out this Ordure that Sin has brought into our Souls, we may yet prepare and make them meet to be ſerv'd up at our Lord's Table. This is the only Way to ſave our Souls; for except we take it away, the Corruption will encreaſe, and the Soul will periſh Eternally without Remedy. For this Jeſus Chriſt frequently repeats in his Goſpel, ‡ *Deny your ſelves*: That is, *your Corruption*, there being no other means of Salvation but only this, that Man retrench and deſtroy the Evil that he himſelf has brought into his own Nature. This made the Apoſtle ſay to the Chriſtians, (*k*) *Work out your Salvation with Fear and Trembling*: For if Man is not afraid of the Damnation under which he is born, and trembles not at the Thoughts of continuing therein, he will not be brought to do any thing for his Salvation, and thus through Spiritual Negligence ſhall periſh in his Corruption.

§. 16. For we are not to believe, as our blind Guides tell us, *That Jeſus Chriſt or his Merits will ſave Men, that have not ſubdued and troden down the Corruption of their Nature*; which being God's Enemy, is of Conſequence Jeſus Chriſt's alſo, as being one with God. Jeſus Chriſt will indeed indirectly ſave corrupt Men, by teaching them the Way of Salvation, and the Means whereby they may be able to ſubdue their *Corruption*. This was his Buſineſs upon Earth, when he became a mortal Man; namely, practically to teach

‡ *Matth.* xvi. 24. (*k*) *Phil.* ii. 12.

Men

Men all they were to do, or leave undone for the ſubduing and deſtroying their Corruption, ſubjecting himſelf upon this Account to the Miſeries that Sin brought upon Man, both in Body and Soul; to the End that being made like unto corrupt Man, he might the better teach him to be born again to the Grace of God by Self-renunciation. This made him ſay, *Follow me*: Jeſus Chriſt's whole Life having been a continual Self-denial, wherein all that would be ſaved ought to imitate and follow him, as he ſomewhere ſays in more expreſs Terms, (m) *He that would come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs and follow me*; which is not ſo to be underſtood, as if Men were to imitate Jeſus Chriſt in the Wonders and Miracles that he wrought, there being now no more Neceſſity of theſe Things, after his Faith and Doctrine are now ſufficiently confirm'd unto us; but he would have Men *imitate him* in denying themſelves, and renouncing their own *Self-wills* entirely, as Jeſus Chriſt renounced his own Will, reſigning it unto the Will of his Father, even as far as to the Death of the Croſs. Finally, We are to imitate Jeſus Chriſt in renouncing the Inclinations of *corrupt Nature*, taking up the Croſs and Sufferings, that we may follow him, deſpiſing this World's Honours, and Riches, and Pleaſures, and chuſing for our ſelves the laſt Place and the leaſt Things for our own Uſe. It is in this Lowlineſs, Littleneſs, Humility and Self-denial, that we are to be Followers of Jeſus Chriſt, ſeeing we cannot on any other Terms be his Diſciples or Chriſtians.

§. 17. Ye ſee how neceſſary it is to take up the Evangelical Life, if ye would be ſaved; he recommends nothing but the Means of curing, ſubduing and overcoming the *Corruption of corrupt Nature*, that thus we may revive into that firſt Grace wherein Man was originally created. For my own part, I cannot diſcover any Means of Salvation, but that which Jeſus Chriſt has taught in his Evangelical Law. Let the Learned gloſs, and explain, and promiſe Salvation without this as they pleaſe, I ſhall not in the leaſt rely upon them; the Matter is of too great Importance, and ſuch as cannot be retriev'd; ſo as there being no other time but this ſhort Life allow'd, wherein we are to work out our Salvation, we ought not to run any Hazard on Eternity. And if we are unwilling to truſt too much in Temporal Concerns, how dare we rely upon the ſingle Word of Men, that are ignorant of God's Ways in thoſe Eternal good Things that we hope for in

(m) *Matth.* xvi. 24.

Hea-

Heaven? They have raiſed Diſputes and Caſes upon ſo many different Points and Matters, that we know not now what to believe. Some Caſuiſts call that Sin, which others ſay is lawful, and has nothing of Sin in it; ſo as one that is deſirous to work out his Salvation knows not whom to believe, and thus commits his Salvation to the uncertain Winds of the contrary Opinions of theſe vagrant Doctrines: Whereas there is but one only true Doctrine in the Matter of Man's Salvation; namely, that which Jeſus Chriſt has again and again repeated, *That we muſt deny our ſelves*, and return to the *Love of God* before we can be ſaved; becauſe Man was made for no other End but that he might love God, and therefore cannot come into his Preſence without this Love; if he is not cloath'd with this Wedding-Garment of his Love. And whoever thinks to be in Paradiſe without this, ſhall have the ſame Treatment as we read in the Goſpel was given to the Man that came to the Feaſt without the Wedding-Garment, concerning whom it was order'd, (n) *Bind him Hand and Foot, and caſt him into outer Darkneſs, where there is Weeping and Gnaſhing of Teeth.* So ſhall it be done at their Death to all that have follow'd the Motions of their *corrupt Nature* during this mortal Life; that have been govern'd by their Self-Love, ſeeking nothing but their Eaſe and Covenience, or private Intereſt and Advantage. Theſe cannot have the Love of God when they die, becauſe all theſe particular Loves baniſh the Love of God from the Soul of Man, and make it meet only to be caſt into outer Darkneſs, where there is Weeping and Gnaſhing of Teeth.

§. 18. Therefore, my Children, conſider what ye have to do, and accordingly order your Affairs for the future. Chuſe betimes the Paradiſe that ye would enjoy to all Eternity. Ask your ſelves or your Reaſon the Queſtion, Whether ye will reſolve to ſubdue your Corruptions, or take up with Hell? There is only a *Yea* or *No* to be return'd to this, all but this being Evil according to the Goſpel. All the Exceptions and human Reaſonings that can be adduc'd in this Point, are idle Words and fruitleſs *Velleities*, [faint Wiſhes] ſuch as will be of no Weight with God, who regards not Reaſonings that have ſo little Truth in them as thoſe that Men uſe, ſaying, *I have a mind to be ſaved*; or, *I am willing to love God*, when in the mean while they continue in their Self-love, and make no Reſiſtance to their *Corruption*: For

(n) *Matth.* xxii. 13.

without Self-renunciation, 'twill be to no Purpoſe to ſay, *God is good, he will ſave us of his Mercy*; or to add, *Jeſus Chriſt will apply his Merits to me.* This will ſave no Man, ſeeing God will not be merciful to Sinners perſevering in their Sins, otherwiſe his Mercy would not be accompanied with Juſtice, which is impoſſible; God's Three Qualities muſt always go Hand in Hand, never to be ſeparated from one another upon any Account; nor will Jeſus Chriſt's Merits be applied unto any, but only thoſe that ſhall imitate him, ſeeing he is neither willing nor able to apply his Merits to thoſe who will continue Enemies to God, by chuſing to comply with the *Motions of corrupt Nature*, which yields nothing but continual Sin.

§. 19. This every Man may obſerve in himſelf, and conclude with me, that all is Sin that cometh of *corrupt Nature*, which being entirely corrupted, can never have ſo much as one good Motion. Obſerve, my Children, that your Nature is no ſooner in Being, than it directs its Affections to that which is beautiful and good in the Earth. Its tender Eyes are delighted in Light and Splendor; its Palate in that which is delicate and Liquoriſh; its Ears in harmonious Sounds: Finally, all the Infant's Senſes are pleaſed in the Beauties and Goods of this World, as the Senſes of all Men naturally are. All which is common to them with the Beaſts, which chuſe the faireſt and beſt Things that come in their Way, becauſe they do not ſee nor know of any other Goods, but thoſe of this mortal Life; nor can they hope for any other, not being capable of Divine Things, by reaſon they are brutiſhly ſet upon this Earth, and think upon nothing beſides it; but Man, who has a Divine Soul, and an Underſtanding to comprehend ſupernatural Things, ought not to be conform'd to the Beaſts, after he comes to the Uſe of his Reaſon.

IV.

The Way to ſubdue Corruption.

§. 20. MAN ought to apply his whole Underſtanding to diſcover *his Origin, and the End for which he is created; what he ought to do in this World, and what will afterwards become of him.* Theſe are ſerious Meditations, that every right Man ought to have. And then he would with Eaſe deſpiſe the Goods of this mortal Life, that he might at-

attain to the Life Eternal: But becauſe Mens Minds are ſet only upon the Earth, it ſeems hard unto them to ſurmount the Inclinations of *their Corruptions*. And this little imaginary Difficulty oft-times makes us loſe the bleſſed Life Eternal, which we cannot attain to, except we deny our *corrupt Nature*, that continually draws Man back from the Love of his God. Wherefore we are not to obey nor conſult with our *corrupt Nature* for the doing of any Good, becauſe it hath no Intereſt in the Treaſures of Eternal Life, which it will never taſte; but the Divine Soul and glorious Body that God has given Men, are to enjoy theſe Eternal good Things to all Eternity; and therefore we are not to hearken to the Counſels or Complaints of this corrupt Nature, which has no other View but the Earth and Time, without any Regard to Eternity. For this it always enclines to Sin without Reſtraint, and the Man who goes on in theſe Sins in Compliance with *his Corruption* does at random infallibly damn himſelf, ſeeing Sin worketh Damnation, and Corruption yields nothing but Sin.

§. 21. This is what few are able to comprehend, becauſe they judge nothing to be Sin, but only groſs and material Evils; as Murther, Theft, Drunkenneſs, Swearing, Whoring, and other Sins of this Nature, ſuch as Men ſee and hear: But all theſe Sins, by what Names ſoever we call them, are not the Eſſence of Sin, which conſiſts in the turning away our Affections from God to place them on ſomething beſides him. This is the only thing that is the Eſſence of Sin, and is the Cauſe of Hell and Damnation, and nothing elſe. For the Sins that we call by different Names are only Accidents of the Eſſence of Sin. For Example: When One commits Murther, this proceeds from the Inclination that he has to ſatisfie his Revenge; and when another ſteals, this comes of his Affection to Covetouſneſs: So in all other Things that we call Sin, they are only the Accidents of Sin, the Eſſence thereof conſiſting in this, that Man withdraws his Affections from God, that he may ſet them upon ſome other Thing; one upon the Riches and Honours of this World, another upon the Pleaſures of Eating and Drinking, or thoſe of the Fleſh, or other Senſualities, that he may ſatisfie the natural Senſes of his Corruption. All theſe Symptoms are Signs that the Man has removed his Affections from his God, (for whoſe Love alone he was created) and ſet them on Objects ſo vile, as are all the Pleaſures of this miſerable Life, which ſhould not be affected by Man, who was made after God's Image, that he might live eternally with

him, and not take up with this mortal Life, where there are no true Pleaſures to be found; though many ſeek for them, their Souls periſh in the Purſuit of a Good that they ſhall never find, becauſe it is not to be found out of God: So as he that turns away his Heart from God to love any other thing but him, ſhall never meet with Reſt or Contentment. He may well amuſe himſelf with many apparent Goods, but ſhall never have Contentment or Satisfaction: For the Pleaſures of this Life are all vain and imaginary only, though ſo many dote upon them to their own Damnation.

§. 22. But as for you, my Children, to whom God has given ſo much Knowledge, do not ye amuſe your ſelves any more in ſeeking your Eaſe, and Solace, and Pleaſure in this mortal World, ſeeing ye are ſent into it, not as into a Place of Reſt and Eaſe, but as into a Place of Penitence, that ye may purge out the Filth of your Sins, and put a Stop to any farther Commiſſion of them, which can never be effected, unleſs one wars againſt his *Corruption*, and overcomes and ſubdues it before his Death. Since it is this and this only that is the Cauſe of the Damnation of Souls, we ought to look upon it as our greateſt Enemy, as in effect it is, and to watch over it Night and Day, leſt it ſurprize us, even in the Night, when it ſtrives with all its Might to lead Man into Sin for its own Satisfaction. For *every Motion of this Corruption is to Sin*, it being incapable of producing any Good. And therefore we ſhould not ſo much as deliberate whether we ſhall comply with the Motions of corrupt Nature, but forthwith deny all its Demands, and oppoſe all its Deſigns; and when it would be in Quiet, we ſhould make it labour; as if it deſires to eat, we ſhould make it faſt; if to ſpeak, keep Silence; to ſit ſtill, if it enclineth to walk; and in every other thing to oppoſe and contradict it, to the end it may be brought entirely under God's Government, who will rule it according to right Reaſon, to which Man's brutal Paſſions ſhall be in ſuch wiſe ſubjected, as he ſhall ever after uſe the Things of this World, only with reſpect to his Neceſſities, without any ſenſual Delight.

§. 23. For as long as our Affections are carried away unto any thing out of God, ſo long are our Souls ſeparated from the Love of God: For Example, If we feed with Affection and Deſire upon delicious Fare, we are in Sin ſo long as this Affection to the Meat or Drink continues with us, ſeeing our Affections cannot at the ſame time be ſet upon Objects ſo vaſtly different; for when they are ſet upon Meat, they cannot at the ſame time be upon God. Some may pro-

probably put the Queſtion here; May we not live upon the good Proviſions that God ſends us? And I give the ſame Anſwer that Jeſus Chriſt himſelf gave his Apoſtles, ſaying, *Eat whatſoever is ſet before you, or any thing that comes to the Market.* He forbids not the Uſe of good Victuals, but the having our Hearts and Souls given up to them; becauſe God will have us to love him with *our whole Heart*, not allowing us to divide it with any other thing, whatever Beauty or Goodneſs it may pretend to.

§. 24. And therefore all that concerns the Five brutal Senſes of Nature, muſt be mortified. Thus if there comes in your Way any beautiful Object, that your Eyes deſire to look upon, ye ought willingly to turn away from that Object, leſt your Affections ſhould be moved to fix upon it. Refuſe your Eyes this Pleaſure, that they may contemplate Divine Objects. Let them rather review the Beauties of the Goſpel-Truths, which will turn to more account to you than the vain Views of all that this World contains. Proceed in like manner againſt the Luſt of the Ear: Upon the hearing any Voice or Muſick, that is capable to charm the Ear, turn away from it, and ſtop your Ears, leſt this Melody ſhould, during the time it continues, divert the Love of God from you. Ye are likewiſe to entertain the ſame Jealouſie of your Smell: When ye come into a Garden, where the Herbs and Flowers ſend forth their grateful Odors, corrupt Nature will forthwith encline to gather and ſmell them, but ſee ye do it not; rather refuſe your Smell this vain Contentment, that is no ways neceſſary to the Preſervation of Life: As the Senſe of *Touching* is no leſs improfitable, ſeeing it only flatters corrupt Nature, and may be the Cauſe of much Sin, and the Loſs of God's Favour: So as the Man that has a mind to be ſaved ought on all Occaſions to reſtrain the Five natural Senſes, not allowing them in any caſe to act of themſelves, but always mortifying them, that he may be of the Number of thoſe *Eunuchs*, that have (o) *made themſelves Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven.*

§. 25. God does not directly require ſo general a Mortification, but it is Man that ſtands in need of all theſe Things to preſerve him in the Love of God: For was it not for this Mortification of the natural Senſes, Man's Heart would be divided into as many Affections as it loves divers Objects; one's Affection would be to his Wife, another's to his Children, another's to his Country, and another's to his Relations, &c. all which things are not God, nor are they worthy of our Heart, which is reſerved for the Love of God only.

(o) *Matth.* ix. 12.

True it is, we may enjoy all these things without sinning, when our Heart does not cleave to them; but we rarely see any Man in this Life, who has not his Heart wedded to some Terrestrial Object. I have known one, that out of Civility and good Manners could moderate her Passions upon some Occasions, having been so taught from her Infancy; but this was only a Piece of Dissimulation and Art, as it appear'd when she fell into Adversity; she became inconsolable, taxing God and Men for the Afflictions that she met with. This made it plain, that she had not mortified her Passions for the Kingdom of Heaven, but only to gain the Applause of Men, who think the Skill of covering one's Passions from Men, a great Vertue, as in Effect it is an Advantage, and a Disposition to solid Virtue. For a rough and violent Temper, besides the Sin in it self, is moreover a Scandal unto others: So as the Man that can mortifie and manage his Passions is happy even in this Life. But then it is a low Design to do this only, that we may have a Name among Men, seeing this is vain, and begets Vain-glory in the Man's Soul that possesses this false Mortification. We must in good earnest war against this *corrupt Nature* for the Kingdom of Heaven, without any other View: Because this Corruption is God's Enemy, we must spend our whole Life in warring against it; as St. *Paul* admonishes Christians, saying, *Our Life is a continual Warfare.*

§. 26. For what have we to fight continually with, if it is not our own Corruption, the sole Enemy of our Souls Salvation? We are prohibited to strive with our Brother, or our Neighbour; so as it cannot be with them that we are to maintain this continual Warfare; nor yet with the Devil, who is not so easily overcome by contending with him, as contemning him. So that we cannot any longer doubt, but this *continual Warring*, which the Apostle recommends, is to be understood of Warring directly against the Corruption that Sin has brought upon human Nature.

§. 27. For as for the Corruption that Sin has brought upon the other Creatures, Man could not subdue it, as he can the Corruption that is enter'd into his own Flesh, over which he has more power than over the Animals and other inferiour Creatures: But that power that he had over all these inferiour Creatures, shall be restor'd to Man when he shall have surmounted his own Corruptions, and is Born again in the Spirit of Christ Jesus. Then shall he rise again in the same Glory and Power that he had before he sinned; so as Man's whole Felicity consists in vanquishing *his Corruption.*

Then

Then ſhall he become a little God upon the Earth: Becauſe God fulfils the Will of thoſe that Love him, and conſequently Man ſhall then accompliſh all his Wiſhes. But if he does not attain to the Dominion over his Paſſions in this World, he ſhall never have Power over any of the inferiour Creatures, which ſhall Tyrannize more Magiſterially over him for ever, than they do now in this Life, where Man is in continual Danger of being Deſtroyed by the Beaſts and other Creatures, over whom he ought to Reign. Thus ſhall he be Eternally ſubjected to the Malice of other Creatures; even after Death, if during this Life he does not get the better of his *own Corruption*, which has brought the Curſe over all things, and unto Man himſelf has been the cauſe of Hell and Damnation.

§. 28. This Malediction alone then proceeding from Mans *Corrupt Nature*, it is what Man ought to Contemn, Contradict, yea, to Extirpate, as the ſource of all his Evils: And yet we ſee moſt Men ſporting themſelves with *their Corruption*; they flatter and careſs it, ſeeking to ſatisfy it in every point, Trading and Travelling, that they may get wherewith to anſwer all its Wiſhes, tho' this Corruption is inſatiable in its deſires, Aſpiring always at what it hath not. The reaſon whereof is, that Man was Created powerful, and poſſeſſing all things in great abundance, he had then the delightful enjoyment of all his Wiſhes to the full; but now that he has loſt the favour of his God, and is become his Enemy, he can meet with nothing that is able to give him full Satisfaction, a thing that is not to be had but in God alone. So that Man may well look for the fineſt and beſt of things for his Uſe before he can be entirely content and fully ſatisfied; for the more one ſhall have taſted the delectable things of this World, the more will his Deſires enlarge themſelves after them; becauſe he ſhall never come to have ſo much as he had, when he was firſt Created.

§. 29. For this reaſon he is always Aſpiring after more inſatiably, and ſhall never be able to ſatisfy his Deſires until he has overcome *his Corruption*, and is reſtor'd unto God's favour by an entire Regeneration; ſeeing it is not meet that the Prince's Enemy ſhould be admitted to the Table and Entertainment that is prepared for his Son: He ſhould be debarr'd from it, and Baniſh'd out of his Palace, as an unworthy Perſon and a Malefactor. Thus will God diſcharge the Man, who will not oppoſe, and hate, and contemn, but follows the motions of *Corrupt Nature*; ſeeing after God had made him his dear Child and Heir of his Kingdom, and given him ſo

much delight and contentment, this ungreateful Creature; unmindful of ſo many favours receiv'd, and taking no notice of the Love that God requires of him, turns away from his Love, that he may ſet his affections upon the mean and vile Objects of this World. Would it be reaſonable to Recompence ſuch Ingratitude with the Satisfactions of this Life? No, my Children, do not believe it that ever any Perſon ſhall be contented and ſatisfied who follows the motions of Corrupt Nature, tho' he were poſſeſs'd of all the Goods, and Riches, and Honors of this World; ſeeing all theſe things cannot ſatisfy his Soul which is Divine, and cannot find perfect contentment but in God alone.

§. 30. Hence my Children, ye may perceive what great Joy, Delight and Happineſs, one has that has overcome the Corruption of his Nature. What repoſe, and tranquillity ought he to have in his Soul, and what full Satisfaction in his Spirit? For,

He nothing hath, who doth not God poſſeſs,
And who hath God, hath all true Happineſs.

I have experienc'd this in my ſelf and others; for ſo long as I follow'd the motions of my Corrupt Nature, I was always uneaſy, never ſatisfied, Aſpiring continually from one Diverſion to another without Satisfaction, beſides the remorſes and diſquiets of Conſcience that I felt in my retirements; but ſince God gave me Grace to know this miſerable State, ſhewing me that I was drawn away from him by Corrupt Nature; and ſince I ſet my ſelf to Fight againſt and ſubdue it, that I might recover God's favour, which I had loſt by my Sins, I have found my ſelf in ſuch Liberty and contentment, as I cannot expreſs the Joy of my tranquillity: Even amidſt the Tears of Contrition my Soul was full of joy and content, wiſhing for nothing more than Tears of contrition to bewail my Sins; in which Tears themſelves I found my conſolation.

§. 31. I was more pleas'd in ſolitude then, than I had been formerly in the Diverſions of the World. I began to take pleaſure in the Mortification of *Corrupt Nature* when I ſaw it had been to me the cauſe of ſo much Grief and Diſpleaſure: I was forward to be Aveng'd of it; accordingly I rais'd a cruel War againſt it, not allowing it even neceſſaries in Eating, Drinking or Sleeping. I lay upon the Boards, and had Stones for my Pillow. I paſs'd the greater part of the Night upon my Knees in Prayer and Meditations; and before I overcame Sleep, I have many times fall'n upon my Face, and made the Blood

come

come from out at my Noſe. I allotted but three Hours in the Night, for Sleep; my Shift was Woven of Horſes Hair. I Drank Water, and abſtain'd from Meat. In fine, my Life was then ſo cruel upon *corrupt Nature*, that I could not have been preſerv'd Alive, without a Miracle from God, who nevertheleſs preſerv'd me in good Caſe to Mens Eyes, who could not diſcover my Auſterities. Theſe I knew ſo well to conceal and diſſemble, as none knew of it, but my Mother, who complain'd of it to my Confeſſor; he thinking to reprimand me, I denied all, ſaying, I did not do any thing, ſeeing in effect all theſe things were but Omiſſions, and not Actions. Thus did I Live for ſeven Years mortifying my *corrupt Nature*, with all my power, becauſe I ſaw it was the Ground of my Damnation, and ſometimes I was afraid to ſhut my Eyes to Sleep, fearing leaſt the Earth ſhould open upon me, when ſleeping, and ſwallow me down to Hell, as I thought I had merited.

§. 32. But after theſe ſeven Years of Penitence, I found all free and indifferent in me, and corrupt Nature wholly Subjected unto God, following the conduct of reaſon, and not that of unruly Paſſions; it was content with every thing, ſuffering patiently as much as I was pleas'd to make it ſuffer, faſting when it had nothing to Eat, and watching when it was not allow'd to Sleep. Finally, this corrupt Nature that had formerly reign'd as Miſtreſs in me, was after this as a little Servant through the Mortification of its ſenſes, and was forward to obey in every thing, without the leaſt ſign of Rebellion. This is the greateſt Victory that one can gain in this World: For tho' one Conquer Kingdoms and Empires, yet if he is ſtill under the Dominion of corrupt his Paſſions, theſe his Governments are but Slaveries under which the Soul Labours and is oppreſs'd without remedy; ſeeing he can never be at reſt nor do any good, under the Dominion of his Paſſions, which always encline him unto Evil, and yield no perfect contentment nor ſatisfaction: So as if there were no Paradiſe to be gain'd by mortifying our *corrupt Nature*, yet a Wiſe Man would ſee it his intereſt to contradict his corrupt Nature, and conquer it, and ſubject it unto reaſon, that he might be happy even in this World. What ought he not to do for his eternal Felicity?

§. 33. Nor do I adviſe you to ſuch Auſterities as will endanger the Life of nature, ſeeing it muſt be ſerviceable to us in doing good; for this Corruption is connected with our Life, and Men cannot Live but with their Corrupt Fleſh:

Fleſh: Wherefore we muſt not quite deſtroy Nature, but only reduce it, and make it Obedient to the Will of God, and pliant to the conduct of right-reaſon; ſo as *this Corruption* may not any longer follow its own Will in any Thing, but comply with the commands of God, and the Dictates of Reaſon.

§. 34. Then will Men find it an eaſy matter to embrace the Evangelical Life: Tho' in its own Nature, it be altogether repugnant to *corrupt Nature*, yet will it become eaſy and agreeable to one that has reſolv'd to Mortifie his corrupt Paſſions. He ſhall ſee that of a truth (q) *Jeſus Chriſt's Yoke is Eaſy, and his Burthen Light*, as himſelf has promis'd in his Goſpel; and that all the difficulty is in the beginning. When we are once got over this firſt difficulty, every Bitterneſs is made Sweet, and the Soul gradually recovers her Liberty, feeling her ſelf as it were loos'd from the many Chains and Fetters of her Slavery, and Subjection to *corrupt Nature*, that inſolent Beaſt, which murmurs continually, and the more it has the more it deſires: Whereas the Evangelical Life gives peace and plenty to the Soul, makes its Contentment conſtant, ſo as it Wiſhes for no more than what it already poſſeſſes.

§. 35. To what then may we impute this difference that we ſee in the ſame Subject, that one Man created by the ſame God, and fall'n into the ſame Condemnation thro' the Sin of *Adam*, is content with all that happens to him, and another Man of the ſame Nature and Origin, is always diſſatisfied and uneaſy in this Life? The difference ariſes from the firſt Man's having Warr'd with and vanquiſhed *his Corruption*, and ſubjected it unto the Will of God and to reaſon; whereas the other lives ſtill under the Tyranny of his inſatiable *Corruption*, which covets continually, becauſe God having created Man in all manner of plenty and pleaſure, Man does ſtill after his Sin bear about with him the deſire of theſe pleaſures and of that abundance, tho' he ſhall not be able to find them in this mortal Life, even after he has purſu'd them with all his might.

§. 36. For there is not one Man in this World in his natural State, but purſues the goods and pleaſures of this Life, by reaſon there is yet in the ground of the Soul a latent inclination to thoſe pleaſures and that abundance that Man enjoy'd at the time of his Creation: And whoever ſays he is not in purſuit of the pleaſures and plenty of

(q) *Matth.* xi. 30.

this

this World, if he is yet unregenerated, is a Lyar: Seeing all Men in general have been Created in abundance, they will all covet this abundance, till ſuch time as they have overcome this vicious Corruption, which would be enjoying things out of ſeaſon, that Men cannot enjoy, but in a ſtate of Innocence, when all pleaſure is Innocent; whereas out of this ſtate, the ſame pleaſures are only Sins heap'd up one upon the back of another to our greater Condemnation, which the Scripture Figures out to us in the great Whore, when it ſays, (r) *Let her Torments be as many, as have been the Pleaſures that ſhe has taken in her Whoredoms.*

§. 37. We may not doubt in the leaſt, but the Man who *complies with the Motions of his Corrupt Nature*, Sins as often as he follows them; ſeeing this Corrupt Nature provokes Men only to do Evil, and no good ever proceeds from it, we muſt conclude, that whatever it deſires is Sin, and as ſuch to be rejected by one that reſolves to be ſaved. It is this continual Combat, that the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, ſaying, *Our Life is a continual Warfare*, becauſe this Corruption is a continual Covetouſneſs, which we muſt never give way to, but continually oppoſe, if we would not fall into continual Sin. This is the reaſon why Jeſus Chriſt ſo often repeats in his Goſpel, *Deny your ſelves*; becauſe there is not any other way to be ſaved, and there needs no more to Damn us to all Eternity, but to follow the Motions of this Corruption, ſeeing we are Born in this ſtate of Damnation, and do nothing in oppoſition to it, but rather comply with it by acquieſcing to this Corruption; we muſt not believe that ſo much as one Man ſhall be ſaved, if he does not renounce his corrupt Nature, which is naturally Obnoxious to Damnation before we are Born; Man being Born in Sin, wherein alſo he ſhall Periſh, if during this Life he does not overcome it. It is an Infatuation to think or believe otherwiſe. Truth it ſelf aſſerts it ſaying, (t) *He who does not deny himſelf cannot be my Diſciple.* And except one is Jeſus Chriſt's Diſciple he cannot be Saved; ſeeing, (u) *He is the way of Salvation, the Truth and the Life.* They are all wandering that are not in this way; they are all in a Lye who are not in this Truth; and out of this Life nothing but Death is to be found.

§. 38. So that the Man that Walks not in the way that Jeſus Chriſt has chalked out unto us, cannot come to the

(r) *Rev.* 18. 7. (t) *Luk.* 14. 33. *Matth.* 16. 24. (u) *Joh.* 14. 6.

City

City that has Salvation; and the Man that receives not the Truths that he has taught us, continues in a Lye, and under Deluſion; and he that does not imitate the Life of Chriſt, is Dead unto Grace, and ſhall not inherit Eternal Life: Seeing Jeſus Chriſt's whole Buſineſs was to leave us an Example, and to Inſtruct us both by Word, and Deed, how we muſt renounce our Corrupt Nature, that we might be Saved: For this, ſays he to Chriſtians, (x) *Follow me*, or *imitate me*; and in another place, (y) *He who Loves me, will do the things that I have done; yea, he ſhall do greater Works than theſe.* Wherefore a Chriſtian ought to turn all his Thoughts, and employ all the Powers of his Body in imitating Jeſus Chriſt as far as poſſibly he can, ſeeing all he did was to give him an Example, and ſays in expreſs terms, *Be ye followers of me.* We muſt cancel and croſs out the whole Holy Scripture, before we can believe the Errour maintain'd by many; namely, that Jeſus Chriſt has Satisfy'd all for us; which I ſhall not refute in this Place, having done this ſufficiently in my other Works; and the rather, becauſe I am now ſpeaking to the Children of God, only ſhewing them the Method how to Live an Evangelical Life practically, and not in Word and Speculation only, diſcovering unto them their *Corruption* ariſing from Sin, and the way how they may renounce and overcome it, to the end they may recover God's Favour, which this ſame Sin loſt them.

§. 39. And becauſe many well-meaning Perſons alledge they know not the method of a compleat Regeneration; I ſhall ſet Jeſus Chriſt himſelf before them for a model and Pattern, who has ſhown us in every particular, how we are to mortify the Old Man, to the end that the New Man may revive in ſincere Souls, and that at their Death they may appear before the Father cloath'd with his Son Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Wedding Garment requir'd for our Admittance to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Let us firſt then begin to conſider how Jeſus Chriſt began his Mortal Life.

§. 40. He was pleas'd to become a Mortal Man like us, and to take upon him the form of a Sinner, (tho' he was King of all the Earth, and had never Sinned) to teach us that we are not to rank our ſelves among the Great, though we be Great in the Eyes of Men; nor to rank our ſelves among the Vertuous, ſo as to eſteem our ſelves beyond others; ſince we ſee him who was Sanctity it ſelf chuſe to bear the reſemblance of a Sinner: For though in effect God ſhould have endued us

(x) *Joh.* xii. 26. (y) *Joh.* xiv. 12.

with

with more than common Vertues, yet is there no reaſon to Glory therein, when we conſider that the greateſt Saints have ſometimes had the greateſt Falls: For Example, *David* and *Solomon*; and many others, who after many Prerogatives they had received, abandon'd their firſt Vertues, and fell into Sin. The Scripture likewiſe ſays, (z) *Let him that ſtandeth, take heed leaſt he fall.* So as it is the Chriſtian's Duty, in imitation of his Saviour, to make no account of his Greatneſs or Vertue, but to embrace the Lowlineſs of Jeſus Chriſt, who from the beginning of his Conception, unto his Death upon the Croſs, did always chuſe the Loweſt and Meaneſt things for his own uſe; And whereas he might have choſen a Queen or Empreſs for his Mother, and a King for his nurſing Father, he choſe only a ſimple Maid and a Carpenter; Perſons of a mean Character to bear the Name of his Father and Mother. Yet we ſee Chriſtians in our Days boaſt of their Family and Vertues. Be not ye followers of them by no means, my Children; but in every thing imitate the Lowlineſs of Jeſus Chriſt; not Praiſing or Eſteeming any thing that concerns your ſelves, ſince our natural Corruption is ſo frail, as we cannot ſo much as hear any Good or Laudable thing of our ſelves, without feeling ſomething of Vain-glory, which we cannot do without Sin. Wherefore when this Nature is tickled with the hearing of any Praiſe, turn away from ſuch occaſions, and avoid thoſe that flatter, or praiſe you; becauſe Jeſus Chriſt ſays, (a) *I reſiſt the Proud, and give my Heart* (or Love) *to the Humble.* If ye Children of God, would have the Heart and Love of God, humble your ſelves always, and refuſe every Pre-eminence that's offered you. Let the Lowlineſs of Jeſus Chriſt be engrav'd in your Hearts; and when ye ſee how Jeſus Chriſt always choſe the meaneſt and leaſt things, as a poor uncovered Stable to be the Palace of his Nativity, do not ye ever chuſe fine large Houſes, beyond neceſſity.

§. 41. Reſt always content with what is neceſſary, without deſiring any more, either Money, or Furniture, or Apparel; for if your Heart covers theſe Superfluities, ye are fallen from the Love of God, and have divided your Heart betwixt God and things ſo Vile, as a Chriſtian ought to be aſhamed to ſet his Affections on them, in prejudice of the Love of God, for which alone he is created. I know Nature always ſeeks what is moſt eaſy and convenient for it; but if ye ſeek theſe things, ye are not Chriſtians, ſeeing Jeſus Chriſt always made choice of thoſe things that were moſt diſagreable to his Human

(z) 1 *Cor.* x. 12. (a) *Jam.* iv. 6.

Nature.

Nature. He had neither Bed nor Lodging, ſaying himſelf, (b) *That he had not* a Stone *whereon to lay his Head.* Wherefore the Chriſtian, in imitation of him, ought to chuſe thoſe things that are moſt incommodious for his own uſe, as far as he is able to bear it: For Example, to Walk on Foot, rather than on Horſe-back, or in a Coach, if his Health and Strength can bear it; and if he has occaſion for any Tools to Work with, they ought to uſe the Coarſeſt, that they may check their Corrupt Nature, which would always be at the fineſt and beſt, and moſt convenient. This alſo comes from Man's Enjoyment (when firſt made) of the fineſt and beſt, and moſt convenient things which God created for Man's Pleaſure and Conveniency: For Man was made Chief and Superiour over all, and 'twas he whom they were all made to obey and pleaſe. But now that Man is by his Sin become the Enemy of God, he is not worthy to uſe the fineſt and beſt things that God created for him, but ſhould content himſelf with the moſt inconvenient and imperfect, and even theſe he is altogether unworthy of, as being a Rebel to the Creator of all that he ſtands in need of. So as every the moſt inconvenient and defective thing for Man's uſe, is too good for him who is become an Enemy to the Creator of all theſe things, and in this reſpect unworthy to uſe any thing that he has Created, how mean or vile ſoever it may be: For it is great Preſumption in one to think himſelf worthy of the fineſt and beſt, and moſt convenient things for his own uſe, when he merits Puniſhment and Torture for his Exceſs and Sin. This is what Man ought always to confeſs, and to believe the vileſt and moſt inconvenient things are too good for him. This would be the way to be always content and ſatisfy'd with what one has, and not to imagine, as Fools do, that they deſerve the beſt of every thing, becauſe they have Money to purchaſe it. This is great Pride, and inſupportable Folly, for one to think he merits all becauſe of his Money, which makes him rather leſs conſiderable; for it is written, That (c) *a Rich Man ſhall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*: And we ſee by Experience, that Rich Men are often the moſt Vicious, exceeding in the Voluptuouſneſs of Corrupt Nature; whereas the Poor are Moderate, becauſe they have not wherewithal to humour their Vicious Inclinations. Hence we may ſee, that Rich Men are not more worthy of the fineſt and moſt convenient things than the Poor, who in effect are in better Circumſtances to imitate the Poverty of Jeſus Chriſt, did they deſire and reſolve ſo to do; ſeeing before we can attain to Spiritual Poverty

(b) *Matth.* viii. 20. (c) *Matth.* xix. 23.

in

in our Souls, we muſt firſt be materially Poor, becauſe of Human Frailty, which for the moſt part knows not how to poſſeſs the Good Things of this World, as if it did not poſſeſs them.

§. 42. Which muſt abſolutely be done by one that would be a Chriſtian: For tho' Jeſus Chriſt was moſt Perfect, and without Queſtion was able to poſſeſs all things, as not poſſeſſing them; yet he was pleas'd to be materially Poor, that he might be an Example for Chriſtians to make themſelves truly *Poor in Spirit*, by obliging them to (e) *quit all their Poſſeſſions*, as was the cuſtom and practice of the Primitive Church, where all thoſe that had a Mind to become Chriſtians were to lay all their Poſſeſſions at the Apoſtles Feet, to be all put in a common Stock, for the ſupplying of the Neceſſities of every one. Think not, my Children, that God has now chang'd his Decree, and that he does not now require of Chriſtians the ſame diſingagement from this World's Goods, as he requir'd of the Primitive Church, ſeeing God is unchangeable, and the ſame God now as he was formerly; and the rather, becauſe Men now are not more Vertuous than they were in the Primitive Times, ſo as to be more able to poſſeſs their Riches as if they did not poſſeſs them. Wherefore I do adviſe all that would become Chriſtians, to free themſelves from the burden of Worldly Riches, that they may imitate the Poverty of Jeſus Chriſt, who never poſſeſs'd any of the Riches of this World.

§. 43. And inaſmuch as Poverty is the Parent of many hardſhips and inconveniencies, we muſt conclude that Jeſus Chriſt and his Diſciples have ſuffered much. This Nature is averſe to, and would always have its Eaſe and Conveniency in all things; which we muſt abſolutely deny it, and rather oblige it to ſuffer hardſhips, that it may accompliſh its Penitence that God enjoyn'd in *Adam*, which *our Corruption* is no ways fond of; it Loves neither God's Law, nor Penitence, ſince it laſts no longer than the ſhort term of this mortal Life, and is reduced to nothing at our Death, and leaves nothing with the Soul of Man but ſenſible Remorſes for his having humour'd and obeyed it. But Man's Soul, and Reaſonable Part, ought to ſee to it ſelf, and ſubdue this *Corruption*, which is the only thing that can keep it back from Eternal Life; and to oblige it to do that which is reaſonable, never allowing it ſcope or liberty to follow its own Motions, which are unqueſtionably always Evil, ſeeing from them no good thing can ever proceed.

(e) *Luke* xiv 33.

§. 44.

§. 44. This was the occaſion of Jeſus Chriſt's ſo often repeating in his Goſpel, *Deny your ſelves*, and of his own practiſing this abnegation in all things effectually, both greater and leſſer, to the end he might give this *Corrupt Nature* a habit of entire ſubmiſſion to the Will of God; a thing that it will never do, if it is not every moment kept in and contradicted, ſeeing this Corruption is continually coveting and deſiring ſomething: For if it ſees any Beautiful Object, the Eyes preſently feed upon it, and the Heart deſires it; if it ſees any new Fruit, the Appetite is preſently awakened, and the Hand ſtretched forth to take and taſte it. Do not ye do ſo, Children of God. Refuſe theſe little Gratifications to your *Corrupt Nature*: If you would have the better of it, and ſubject it to the Will of God, yè muſt croſs it in the leaſt things, remembring how the Scripture ſays (g), *Be ye Faithful in Little Things, and I will ſet you over Great.* And in effect, Corruption will ſometimes feel a greater repugnancy to be denied an Apple, or a Cherry, than if it were Gold or Silver, or other things of greater Value. It is not the matter of the things that is the Sin, but the affection of the Heart, which is carried away to Love what it ſees: For *Adam*'s Sin towards God, was the Eating of an Apple, a thing not very rare or valuable. Thus does Corrupt Nature often cleave unto vile and inconſiderable Objects, as to a Dog for example, or Bird, or things that are yet of leſs Value. It is enough if the Devil draws us off from God, tho' it were by a Thread or Hair only. He has no need of Chains to bind us unto himſelf, and eſtrange our Affections from God, to whom of right they all do belong. He Triumphs over us whenever he can prevail with us to ſet our Heart upon any Creature, or even upon our ſelves; Self-love being the moſt dangerous and pernicious Affection that we can have in this World, becauſe our Corruption is ſo fond of it, as it would go near to Die if Self-love ſhould forſake it.

§. 45. But the Man that's Faithful to his God, has no regard to this Corruption, being indifferent whether it live or die, knowing that his whole Happineſs depends upon his Loving God both in Life and Death. He will not ſpare his Life in warring againſt this Corruption, but is willing to ſacrifice it in ſo meritorious a Cauſe. As Jeſus Chriſt ſpared not his Life, that he might Inſtruct us in the way of Salvation; ſo ought we not to be ſparing of our own Lives in ſubduing Corrupt Nature, which would lead us unto Damnation and Eternal Death. It is better the Body Die than the

(g) *Matth.* xxv. 23.

Soul,

Soul, which is of greater Value than a mortal Body, that cannot endure long, but muſt ſhortly Die of courſe: For this reaſon we ought not to fear Death ſo much as Sin that kills the Soul, but reſolve to let the Body Die, rather than not conquer and ſubdue this Corruption, which if it is left to humour its own Inclinations, and gets the aſcendant in us, will infallibly drag us into Hell: For, as I have already aſſerted, we are born in a State of Damnation, out of which we ſhall never be delivered, if during this miſerable Life, we do not War againſt this Corruption, and mortify it in us, that we may Live again to the Spirit of Chriſt Jeſus. This Truth is ſo neceſſary, that I cannot repeat it often enough; the not knowing of which, is capable to be the ruin of all Men: For how many are there, who think there's no Sin in ſimply humouring the *Motions of their Corrupt Nature, or their own Will*, provided therein they do nothing reprehenſible in the Eyes of Men? Which is a great Deceit, ſeeing the humouring our own Wills is enough, and there needs no more to Damn us; becauſe the Wills and Affections of all Men are Corrupt thro' the Sin of *Adam*.

§. 46. This is what Jeſus Chriſt bears Teſtimony to, ſaying in his Prayer, (*h*) *Not my Will, but thine be done, O my Father!* Likewiſe Inſtructing his Diſciples, he recommends to them his own Example in this, (*i*) *I am not come to do my own Will, but the Will of him that ſent me.* Now if the Wills of Men were not Evil, why ſhould Jeſus Chriſt Pray that his Will might not be done, but his Father's? He knew perfectly well that only the Will of God was Good, and that the Wills of all Men are become Corrupt and Evil through the Sin of *Adam*: And inaſmuch as Chriſt's mortal Body iſſu'd from the Virgin *Mary*, who was a Daughter of *Adam*, it is partaker of this Corrupt Maſs: Jeſus Chriſt drew from hence the Corruption of his own Will, the Knowledge whereof made him Pray thus to his Father, that not his own Will, but his Father's might be accompliſh'd. And if Jeſus Chriſt, who was ſo Holy and Perfect, as that he never Sinn'd, was in Pain leaſt his Will ſhould be done; how much more afraid ought Criminal Men to be of the fulfilling of their Wills, who over and above the Corruption that they have contracted from *Adam*, are guilty of ſuch numbers of actual Sins, which have more and more Corrupted their Wills, and encreas'd the Evil; adding to all this, that Jeſus Chriſt has told them ſo expreſly, (*k*) *That he was not come to do his own Will, but the Will of him that ſent him.*

(h) *Mat.* xxvi. 39, 42. (i) *Joh.* vi. 38. (k) *Joh.* v. 30.

§. 47. Is there not then a neceſſity for any who would be Chriſtians, abſolutely to renounce their *own Will*, ſeeing it is evil on all Accounts, both as we inherit it from our Father *Adam*, and further as 'tis vitiated by our own Sins? And yet we daily ſee Men of the beſt Intentions continue wedded to their own Wills, and think they are not to be blam'd for ſo doing. This can be no other than a Blindneſs brought upon them by the Devil, that he may thus precipitate the well-meaning into Hell, as well as the Wicked, who are drawn after this Enemy by groſs and manifeſt Sins; whereas thoſe others muſt be led by the Silken Thread of their *own Will*; and ſoftly allur'd and withdrawn from the Love and Will of God, to faſten their Affections upon *their own Will*. This our Nature is much enclin'd to, and is not more fond of any thing than accompliſhing *our own Will*, imagining our ſelves happy if we are able to do this, chuſing rather to do Evil in our own Will, than to do Good in the Will of God, to which our Corruption has a continual Averſion.

§. 48. This comes of Man's being Originally created by God, with ſuch abſolute Dominion, as that all things were Obedient to his Will. He had no more to do but command the Air to bear him whither he had a mind to be; or the Waters to ſtand firm for him to walk on them; or the Earth to open his way into its inmoſt Receſſes: Finally, he could by his ſingle Will make all the Beaſts to come and fawn upon him, and divert him; for all were Obedient to him without contradiction. And the Inclination to this Dominion, and the Pleaſure of ſeeing all Subjected unto him, and Obeying his Will, remains yet in the Ground of Man's Soul, after his Sin and Corruption. So as he would be willing that all ſhould yet Obey him, and perform his Pleaſure, as at the beginning of his Creation, even now after his Sins have laid him under all thoſe things over which he ought to have Reigned. Yea, which is more, he would be Reigning over Men like himſelf, and obliging them to comply with his Will, tho' he is incapable to manage himſelf, and often regrets his following his own Will, in what concerns his own Perſon. Though he often ſees and is convinc'd he does ill in following his own Will, yet he Loves it, and continues to humour it, that he may pleaſe this miſerable Corruption, the Enemy of his Happineſs.

§. 49. Wherefore, my Children, do not ye do ſo any more: Join rather with Jeſus Chriſt to pray that your own Wills may not be accompliſhed, than to pray and endeavour that they may be, or to rejoyce when they are fulfilled:

And

And when ye perceive your Corruption enclining to humor *your own Will*, refuſe it generouſly, ſaying with Jeſus Chriſt, *Not my Will, O Father, but thine be done in me:* Or otherwiſe Eternal Remorſes will waſte your very Bowels, when ye ſee how that in order to have your own Wills accompliſh'd, ye have loſt Eternal Life. An irreparable Evil! for the little Satisfaction of humoring your own Will, it may be in things of no Conſideration, and ſuch as are unworthy of a Man of Judgment, whoſe Will ought to guide him unto what is good and reaſonable; whereas this Self-deprav'd Will rages like a wild Beaſt, not knowing often what it would be at. And if God ſhould grant the Deſires of Man's own Will, Man would repent of it, and often be made miſerable by it; becauſe this Self-will being evil, engenders all ſorts of Evils, and never any Good proceeds from it; and if ye, Children of God, be willing to pleaſe your Heavenly Father, never follow your own Wills in any thing. Endeavour to diſcover the Will of God, and to obey it; as alſo the Will of your Neighbour, as far as it is good. Ye have a great Advantage to know the Mind of one that has overcome her own Will, and will never induce you to do any Evil. Therefore deny your own Will, and follow her's, until ſuch time as God ſhall directly make known his holy Will to you; which will never be until ye have conquer'd your *corrupt Nature*: For God has no Communion with his Enemies, and when he converſes with any Perſon, it is as one Friend converſes with another.

§. 50. Study, my Children, to overcome your Corruption, that ye may be ſo happy as to converſe with God in this manner, who never admits any Perſon into his Friendſhip, who is not cloathed with the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, which is a Spirit of Mortification to corrupt Nature: Nor can we come to Heaven by any other Way, than by denying our ſelves, as Jeſus Chriſt has declared it. Let us tread in his Steps. Let us not deſire any thing out of him, who has inſtructed us in every thing, to the end that none might periſh through Ignorance. Men may gloſs and comment as they pleaſe, all their fine Diſcourſes and fair Promiſes will not be able to ſave us, if we our ſelves do not overcome the *Corruption of our Nature*. This Point muſt be gain'd before we can be ſaved: All theſe divers Opinions and Reaſonings, theſe Theological Points and Studies ſignifie nothing to Salvation, if the Perſon himſelf is not exerciſed in the *Mortification* of his *corrupt Nature*.

§. 51. It is an eſtabliſh'd certain Truth, that God created Man for no other end, but to *love him*; and that Man has withdrawn his Love from God, and freely ſet his Affections on other things beſides him, becoming God's Enemy by this means, and oppoſing the Deſign God had in creating Men. This Enmity muſt neceſſarily be done away, and Man reconciled unto God, by confeſſing and abjuring his Fault, ſo as not to relapſe into it, firmly reſolving never any more to place his Affections upon any thing but God alone: If this is not done, there is no true Repentance or Amendment, and conſequently no Hopes of Salvation. For this Reaſon Jeſus Chriſt comes to recommend Self-denial to us, as the laſt Remedy for our Evils, and the laſt Mercy that God will ſhew to Men; and he that will not uſe theſe Remedies, ſhall periſh everlaſtingly, with many others that have before this either neglected or deſpiſed this *Evangelical Life*. My Meaning is not, that Chriſtians do diſparage the Evangelical Life by their Words, ſaying expreſly, that it is Evil; but they do it in their Actions, practiſing directly contrary to what Jeſus Chriſt has enjoyned in that Law, though it contains nothing but what is abſolutely neceſſary to our Salvation.

§. 52. The Reaſon of this abſolute Neceſſity is, becauſe Man having miſplaced his Affections upon ſo many divers Objects, as upon Riches, Pleaſures, Wit, Eaſe, Conveniency, and Glory, upon Eating and Drinking, Furniture and Cloathing, and a Multitude of other things, muſt of Neceſſity be exerciſed in giving a particular Check to all theſe things in particular, before he can be regenerated in the Grace of God; and the Evangelical Doctrine furniſhes him the Means of doing this, recommending to him Poverty of Spirit againſt the Love of Riches; and the Mortification of the Fleſh againſt the Pleaſures of this Life; when it ſays, (*l*) *Fleſh and Blood ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.* The Evangelical Law does likewiſe check the Ambition of Man's Spirit, that would always be reigning over and regulating others, when it ſays, (*m*) *Let no Chriſtian be called Maſter*; and when Jeſus Chriſt ſays to his Diſciples, (*n*) *Ye call me Lord and Maſter, and ye ſay right, for ſo I am; and yet I, who am your Maſter, have been a Servant unto you all, and have waſhed your Feet.* This deſtroys all the Glories of Dominion, and overthrows the Ambition of Man's Spirit, who is always ſetting himſelf before others, and confines all Right

(l) 1 *Cor.* xv. 20. (m) *Matth.* xxiii. 8. (n) *John* xiii. 13, 14.

and

and Reaſon to his own Conceptions. Do not ye do ſo, my Children; rather give place unto others in things that are not evil, that ye may overcome the Ambition of your Spirit, that would be thought wiſe in all things, though Sin has made it a very Fool. *Corruption* will not be brought to own this, if it be not conſtrain'd to it by repeated Acts of Humility, which the Goſpel has often recommended, ſaying, (o) *Be humble of Heart*; and, (p) *Chuſe the loweſt Place*: Thus every one ought to eſteem himſelf in Imitation of Jeſus Chriſt, (q) *A Reproach of Men, yea, a Worm and no Man*; who ought not to have his Eaſe and Conveniencies, as being in a Place of Penitence, and knowing that Chriſt and his Apoſtles were, during their Stay in this World, attended with many Difficulties and Hardſhips, walking on foot from Place to Place in Poverty, which alone is accompanied with many Inconveniencies, not allowing any to be fine in their Furniture or Apparel, nor delicate in Eating and Drinking. In all which things the Goſpel teaches us to be ſober: And yet Chriſtians ſtudy now nothing more than Delicacy, how they may ſatisfie the Appetites of corrupt Nature, which continually enclines us to that which is moſt delicious. Inſtead of Mens delighting themſelves in God, they ſeek their Pleaſure in corruptible Food. In this they are guilty of great Infidelity towards their Creator, who made them that he might delight himſelf in them. And this cannot be remedied, except, offering Violence to Nature, we exerciſe our ſelves in refuſing her all her Senſualities, and manfully renouncing all her Appetites without Partiality.

§. 53. For whoever indulges or excuſes his Corruption, ſhall never be Maſter of it, the Devil ſuggeſting to his Belief, that he is not able to live in perfect Sobriety, nor obey the Evangelical Counſels; and he who gives ear to the Whiſpers of this infernal Serpent, ſhall never be ſaved; he may reſt ſatisfied with the Pleaſures of this World, which he has choſen; for he ſhall have no Portion in thoſe that be Eternal. Children of God, if ye be wiſe, believe the Truth that is come forth from God by Jeſus Chriſt, who ſays, (r) *His Yoke is eaſie, and his Burthen light*, that ye may give the Lye to the Devil and corrupt Nature, which would be always reigning and domineering, ſeeking her Eaſe and Pleaſure in this World, the Conſequence whereof will be Eternal Torments to the Soul.

(o) *Matth.* xviii. 4. (p) *Luke* xiv. 10. (q) *Pſal.* xxii. 6. (r) *Matth.* xi. 30.

V.

The Way to live an Evangelical Life.

§. 54. WERE it not better to oppoſe this, and embrace an *Evangelical Life*, which God now preſents unto all well-meaning Perſons? He conſtrains none, that he may leave them their full Liberty wherein they were created; but he offers his Grace to thoſe that are willing to undertake it, and to exerciſe themſelves faithfully in it. Such Perſons ſhall be bleſſed of the Lord, and ſhall be ſatisfied with all the Pleaſure that Tranquillity of Mind and Peace of Conſcience can give. We need no Academies to inſtruct us in our Duty, ſeeing Jeſus Chriſt has taught the whole in Word and Deed. There's no Occaſion for any Theological or Religious Diſputes, ſeeing no Parties in Religion can ſave any Man, and the Quinteſſence of true Theology is contain'd in the *Evangelical Law*. Let us keep to this without going any further. This is not now a Seaſon to ſeek for Truth and Salvation any other where, but in the *Evangelical Life*, which God is willing now to reſtore upon the Earth by his laſt Mercy. He will not require of Men any more Offerings or Sacrifices, but thoſe only of our Hearts and Affections. No Man ſhall want to be *taught by another*: Every one ſhall learn his Leſſon in the *Evangelical Law*, which in theſe (laſt) Days ſhall be accompliſh'd in full Perfection, *better* than it has been by the Apoſtles and Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, and by all the Primitive Churches, who came not to their full Perfection, as they ſhall do now in the Fulneſs of Time, wherein we live at preſent, and wherein God opens up all the Holy Scriptures and Myſteries formerly hidden and unknown.

§. 55. Don't ye ſee already, Children of God, this bright Morning ſpreading it ſelf over our Horizon, and warming the Hearts of many with a Love of the Truth? And if theſe had the Skill to deny themſelves, they would forthwith be Chriſtians; but ſo long as the Knowledge of the Truth is not accompanied with this Abnegation of *corrupt Nature*, it is to no Purpoſe that they embark in this New Church, which Jeſus Chriſt will very ſhortly eſtabliſh upon the Earth, nouriſhing them with his Evangelical Law, as it were Bread for their Souls. (s) *They ſhall be his People, and he will be their*

(s) *Jer.* xxxi. 8.

God,

God, to govern them after his good Pleaſure; (t) *Drying up the Tears which they have ſhed*, under the Tyranny of Human Governments; and to ſatisfie them with the Joy of the New Church, wherein every one ſhall be filled with the Divine Wiſdom, which teacheth all things. Such is the bleſſed State of all thoſe Perſons that are reſigned unto the holy Will of God, after they have firſt renounced and ſubdued their *Corruption*. For before this is done, they are incapable of the Divine Conduct; there being nothing harder for *corrupt Nature* to ſuffer, than the Denying its own Will to make way for another's; ſo as inſtead of rejoycing in the Divine Conduct, Men are rather diſſatisfied with it, having an Averſion to that which proceeds not of their own Self-will. Theſe are not the Perſons whom God will repleniſh with his Holy Spirit, nor will he give them Grace to *live an Evangelical Life*; they muſt be ſuch as have ſubdued their own Wills, and ſubjected them to God's Will in every thing, and think it is their Happineſs to know the Will of God, that they may do it; not permitting that *Corruption* to murmur, or rebel, or contradict the Holy Will of God. This the Soul ought to receive with Joy, and to ſuppreſs its Corruption that will be againſt it. Let it murmur and grumble, this ought not to hinder the Will of God from being done in it. We are not to gratifie this inſolent Corruption to the Prejudice of our Souls, but rather to make it ſubmit and ſuffer, until it is brought to nothing, and ſo mortified and ſubdued, that it complies as readily with God's Will as with its own.

§. 56. Nor will a leſs Degree of Mortification be ſufficient for thoſe that would be Members of this New Church, which God is now preſently to eſtabliſh upon the Earth. This ſhall be a true Reformation, not like the Reformation of corrupt Men, who thought to reform others before they reform'd themſelves; and thus they deform'd the Church of God much more than they reform'd it; and yet affect to be called Reformers, though they ought rather to be called Deformers of the true Church. But Jeſus Chriſt deſigns now himſelf to reform his Church, wherein there will be no more Occaſion for *Traders with Human Souls*, as the Apoſtle (u) calls the Prieſts, *who make Merchandize of Mens Souls*, that they may reap their own Advantage from them. Theſe are no better than Hirelings, whoſe Labours, and Studies, and

(t) *Rev.* vii. 17. *Ibid.*--- xxi. 4. (u) 2 *Pet.* ii. 3. *Rev.* xviii. 11.

Preaching, is to get Money, and to proſelyte Men to themſelves, inſtead of leading them unto God. All this Traffick ſhall ceaſe when Jeſus Chriſt himſelf ſhall govern his Church freely, and out of pure Love and Charity towards Men, that he may bring them unto his Father, and give them full Aſſurance of the Eternal Life, for which they are created. Is it not God's great Mercy that he does yet once more, before the End of this perverſe World, offer Men the Light of his Truth, by which the Good may ſtill be ſaved, and return to the Favour and Grace of God, which they have been ſo great Strangers to? and that they ſhall be yet once more recalled from theſe Wandrings, and, like the loſt Sheep, brought back to their Lord's Sheepfold? Who can ſufficiently comprehend this great Love of God to Men, after they have ſo often offended, and ſo juſtly merited Hell? Is not God wonderful in his Goodneſs to wicked and profligate Men, who even after they have received the Evangelical Law, and received it as coming from God, have thus deſpis'd and forgotten it, and done directly contrary to his Orders, without any Fear or Care of their Souls Salvation? A Thing that deſerves ſevere Chaſtiſements; inſtead of which God offers them yet once more his Mercy, ſhewing them a-new what they ought to do, that they may recover God's Favor, and this with ſo many Circumſtances and Means, as the like has never formerly been done.

§. 57. Not that God gives new Laws, or frames a new Goſpel, ſeeing Jeſus Chriſt came in the laſt Hour, and brought the laſt Law of Mercy with him; which very Law he comes now to renew, to remind Men of this forgotten Law, to the end they may practiſe it, and may a-new obſerve what the Chriſtians of the Primitive Church obſerved. For this End it is that God has made me to be born into the World, that I might declare his Truth unto Men, and diſtinguiſh it from the Lying and Diſſimulation that abounds in the World; that it might be fulfilled which is foretold in the Holy Scriptures, ſaying, (x) *The Goſpel of the Kingdom ſhall be preach'd in all the World*, which has not hitherto been done, ſeeing there is only that little Corner of the World where Chriſtianity is planted, where the Goſpel of Chriſt has been preach'd; and even that is not the Goſpel of the Kingdom, ſeeing Chriſt has not yet reign'd in Mens Souls, but has rather been ſet at nought of them, and his Doctrine lightly eſteem'd; as we ſee to this Day, Men ſeem to have an Averſion to and Diſeſteem

(x) *Mark* xiii. 10.

of

of his Lowlineſs and Poverty, there being none that are willing to be abaſed, and yet leſs to be poor: So as it may be ſaid of the preſent Chriſtians, as it was in Jeſus Chriſt's Days, (y) *That he was an Offence to the Jews, and Fooliſhneſs to the Gentiles*; ſeeing Jeſus Chriſt's Lowlineſs is an Offence to Chriſtians, and his Humility their Averſion, all uſing Means to raiſe themſelves to Authority and Grandeur. And the Man that does not ſet a Value upon himſelf now, is of others held to be a Fool: So that the Evangelical Law is quite renvers'd by thoſe that are now called Chriſtians.

§. 58. Will it not require a powerful Voice then to preach this Goſpel a-new, and *That of the Kingdom, which muſt be preach'd all over the Univerſal World?* This is what God beſtows on me in a powerful Pen, which delivers his Truth at the Peril of my Life: For none but God could deliver me from the Fury of the Enemies of this Truth; ſo great is their Averſion to it, that they ſeek to kill me, becauſe I preach it. They ſhould find fault with God himſelf, who employs me in this, and for this end made to me be born. If the Wicked put me to Death, they kill *God's Meſſenger*, ſeeing I am not come of my ſelf, nor know I how I could learn the Myſteries that I advance, if God did not reveal them to me. Was there ever any Author in the World that has aſſerted Divine Myſteries ſo unknown, and Truths ſo clear and ſolid, with ſo many convincing Reaſons, as all who read them with Application are convinced by them? Neither the Good nor the Wicked can doubt, but this muſt proceed from the Inſpiration of the Holy Spirit. But the Wicked having no mind to receive theſe Truths of God, treat them with Contempt and Calumny, being afraid of the Confuſion they muſt be in, when it is clearly made out, that their Lives are Anti-Chriſtian.

§. 59. Their Will is to remain wicked, and retain the Reputation of being good; which God will not ſuffer any more. Wherefore he makes me write the Truth of Evil, as alſo the Truth of Good, that none may periſh any more through Ignorance, but both Good and Bad may know the Truth, which every one ſhall be in full Freedom to receive or reject. For God having created all Men in general free, will not conſtrain any. He confines them not unto any thing, but continually offers his Good unto all. As he (z) *makes his Sun to ſhine equally upon the Good and Bad.* But thoſe who reject his Grace and Favour, run after their own Miſery, doing

(y) 1 Cor. i. 23. (z) *Matth.* v. 45.

all

all the Miſchief to themſelves only. As for me, my Purpoſe is to obey the Orders that God has given me, and by my Pen to preach the *Goſpel of the Kingdom*, to the end that all the World may hear it. If the Wicked kill me, it will be no Impediment to the Truth, which will continue true, ſeeing none ſhall be able to change it, no more than they ſhall be able to alter the Deſigns God, has to renew his *Goſpel-Spirit* before the End of the World. He both can, and will effectually do this in all that will prepare themſelves for it, by denying their *corrupt Nature*.

§. 60. Theſe ſhall forthwith receive this promiſed Holy Spirit, which will teach them every Truth. Jeſus Chriſt will reign over theſe peculiar Perſons as abſolute King of their Wills. Nor may we believe, that he will make choice of *John* or *Peter* to reign over him, ſeeing God is not a (*a*) *Reſpecter of Perſons*. He regards only thoſe that abandon their own Wills, ſo as they give themſelves up to be entirely govern'd by the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt. Wherefore, Children of God, do ye from this very Moment ſet about the Warring againſt your *corrupt Nature*, if ye wiſh to be Stones for this new Building. Beſtir your ſelves in this, ſeeing ye know not when the Lord ſhall come, which will be very ſoon. *He knocks at the Door* of your Heart with my Pen; open unto him betimes, leſt Death ſurprize you before ye have ſubdued your Corruption, and ye be rejected as unworthy from the Marriage-Feaſt, and be ſhut out with the fooliſh Virgins in the Goſpel, who having ſlumbered, came too late; and though they knock'd afterwards at the Gate, found no Admittance, but had the ſevere Anſwer, (*b*) *I know you not*. What a melancholy thing would it be to the Children of God to be thus rejected, and ſent to thoſe who ſell to buy the Oil of Charity, when it would be too late!

§. 61. Children of God, I hope that by this time ye have ſufficiently diſcover'd what Age it is we now live in; in what State Man was created; what Change Sin has brought upon him; and what he muſt do to be ſaved; that we are now living in the laſt Days; that God's Judgments are hanging over our Heads; that all Fleſh hath corrupted his Ways; and that there is nothing found in the Houſe of God, which is his true Church; that Men have forgotten God; that Truth and Juſtice is no more to be found among them; that all Men are gone into the broad Way, which leads to Perdition;

(a) *Acts* x. 34. (b) *Matth.* xxv. 12.

and

and that it is of our Days that the Prophet ſays, (*d*) *God conſidered the whole Earth, and there was not found one that did Good*, repeating, *No not one.* And tho' all this be moſt true, yet is there ſome Hope remaining for thoſe that are willing to become God's Children, ſeeing God is ſtill willing once more to offer Men his laſt Mercy, by Eſtabliſhing his Goſpel Spirit upon the Earth.

§. 62. Which God has reveal'd unto me for the Comfort of Good Men, as he has likewiſe foretold it by his Holy Prophets, in many places of the Holy Scriptures, as in the paſſage where it is ſaid, (*e*) *That Darkneſs has Covered the whole Earth, and the People are Blind; but upon you ſhall my Light Ariſe.* Muſt not we hereby underſtand the Blindneſs and Darkneſs that now Covers the Earth, and Blinds the Eyes of all Men, and the Light of Truth which God will make to Shine forth out of the midſt of this Darkneſs, upon thoſe that are willing to Embrace an Evangelical Life? Theſe (*f*) *Shall be his People, and he will be their God.* 'Tis of ſuch the Prophet ſays, (*g*) *That he will lead them to Feed in Fat Paſtures.* All which paſſages of Scripture give us to Underſtand, that in the laſt Days, God will renew his Church, and repleniſh it with *Righteouſneſs* and *Truth.*

§. 63. We muſt not conſent with thoſe Gloſſers upon the Scriptures, who would have theſe things referred unto the Life Eternal, ſeeing it would be needleſs to foretell ſuch things of the Life Eternal, where no Body queſtions, but Righteouſneſs dwells in full Perfection. But in this Corrupt World, where we ſee Unrighteouſneſs and Deceit truly Eſtabliſh'd, it is a great promiſe from God, and matter of Wonder, that amidſt ſuch exceſs of Sin, he will yet once more repeat his laſt Mercy, by re-eſtabliſhing his Church upon the Earth; and that all the Members of it ſhall Live in Righteouſneſs and Truth, adhering unto God alone. This ſhall be a new Church indeed, when the Old that is full of Unrighteouſneſs and Sin ſhall be exterminated, and all her old Failings vaniſhed away, that one entirely New may be rais'd out of her, and all that is therein may be renewed, according as God promiſes in Scripture, ſaying, (*h*) *He will make all things New*, ſeeing *all old Things ſhall be done away.*

§. 64. Thus under the ancient Law, we ſee God requir'd from his Church whole Burnt Offerings and Sacri-

(d) *Pſal.* liii. 3. (e) *Iſa.* lx. 2. (f) *Jer.* xxxi. 1. (g) *Pſal.* xxiii. (h) *Rev.* xxi. 1, 5.

fices;

fices; and after *Moſes*'s time, he requir'd Men to be Circumcis'd, and to give him the Tenth of all that they poſſeſs'd, giving them ſo many Laws, Precepts and Prohibitions, that the Jews thought God's Law a burthen, yea inſupportable: And by the Evangelical Law God ſignified his Will to have Man's Heart entirely, without allowing it any longer in the enjoyment of Honour, or Riches, or Pleaſures, that are vain and tranſient. This was the reaſon why the Apoſtles and other Diſciples of Chriſt, requir'd of all that would be Chriſtians, that they ſhould part with all that they had; looking upon this diſengagement to be the true means of recovering their whole Heart to the love of God alone, ſo as it ſhould not any longer Love the Riches, Honours, and pleaſures of this World, to which corrupt Nature is continually enclin'd. And in as much as we muſt renounce this before we can be Chriſt's Diſciples; the Apoſtles and other Pious Souls, zealous for Gods Glory, and their Neighbour's Salvation, have added many different means, by which we may be carried on to this Love of God, which is ſo neceſſary for our Salvation: Such are the confeſſing our Sins, as the Scripture directs, ſaying, (h) *Confeſs your Sins one to another*; and the Holy Supper alſo for uniting Chriſtians in the Spirit of Charity; as a heap of many grains ground and mix'd together becomes Bread for the Nouriſhment of the Body, ſo likewiſe the Charity of many faithful is Nouriſhment for Souls. And thoſe Holy Fathers and Pious Souls, ſeeing Men have an opinion of eating and drinking, did adviſe, yea, ordain to Faſt, that the pampering of the Body might not wed the affections unto carnal Pleaſures, in prejudice of the Love of their God: And ſeeing Jeſus Chriſt had ſaid, (i) *That we muſt Pray always and never Ceaſe.* Theſe Pious Souls have prepared Temples, appointed Prayers unto God at certain times and ſet Hours, and oblig'd Prieſts to read the Pſalter in ſo many Diviſions during the whole Day, to the end they might be kept in continual Prayer.

§. 65. But Chriſtians have abus'd all theſe things and many more, or have thought them to be the End of their Salvation: Which God being much offended at, deſigns to take away (the abuſe of) all theſe outward Sacraments, and Works, or Prayers, to the End Men may henceforth truly Worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth, and no more by outward Geſtures, or Hypocriſie,

(h) *Jam.* v. 16. (i) *Luke* xviii. 1. *Theſſ.* v. 17.

which

which he complains of by his Prophet, who ſays, (k) *This People draws near to me with their Lips, and their Heart is far from me.* We have long enough had holy Things in contempt, and abus'd the Ordinances which the Saints eſtabliſhed as means of the Chriſtians Salvation. God will not any longer ſuffer theſe abuſes and contempt of Holy Things, as Men now profane them; he will deny them the occaſion of doing this any more; for he will have no more Law, nor Sacrifices, nor Temple, nor Altar: All this muſt paſs away, ſeeing he will have *all things New.* The meaning of this is not that he will deſtroy or change the Evangelical Law; his deſign is to bring it to perfection, to reſtore it to its firſt State, and reform it by the Inſtitutor himſelf, who has born 1680 Years with the abuſe and contempt of it. He will not bear with it much longer. And therefore whoſoever would be ſecure from the Judgments that this great Whore has merited, ought to withdraw from the entanglements of this World. O how deſirable a thing were it to be aſſociated with Chriſtians, united in the Spirit of Chriſt, ſo as to adhere to him, forgetting the World! But alas! What ſhall I ſay of this Aſſembly, ſeeing there is not one Stone united unto another with the Cement of Charity? What Stones then may be fit for the Edifice of this New Church, I have been 13 Years ſearching, and theſe Materials are ſo rare that I have not as yet met with any thing meet for the Edifice of this new Church. Many have been willing to follow me, and none to renounce *corrupt Nature.* They would be *ſerving two Maſters,* God and corrupt Nature; looking upon the manner of denying themſelves as a piece of Cruelty; tho' they ſaid they were willing to do this, yet all was but faint deſires, no *abſolute and effectual Will.* Thus do even well meaning Men go halting between two Opinions, as I have experienced in ſome that have come to ſtay with me, propoſing to become good Chriſtians: tho' the leaſt uneaſineſs to their corrupt Nature made them repine and complain often, looking for more Eaſe and Pleaſure to their Bodies in the Service of God, than they could have expected in the World, when they ſerv'd it with all diligence; which was very far from the forſaking the eaſe and delight that one may have in the World, to embrace a Life of Penitence, conformable to what Jeſus Chriſt taught, and practis'd himſelf when upon this Earth.

(k) *Iſai.* xxix. 13.

§. 67. Which

§. 67. Which likewiſe muſt be done by all thoſe that would become Chriſtians; ſeeing the whole of Chriſtianity conſiſts in the Imitation of Jeſus Chriſt, who choſe to be Poor, that he might give us an example of Poverty; tho' Men are rich, and may (as the World imagins) lawfully poſſeſs Riches, yet notwithſtanding, he that would be a Chriſtian, muſt abandon them; as he muſt alſo his eaſe and delights for a painful Life, which he muſt embrace as all holy Perſons have done, who after they had given themſelves unto God, did not any longer ſeek after their own Eaſe and Conveniencies; on the contrary, they choſe hardſhips, and perform'd painful exerciſes to macerate their Bodies: For we read of ſome Fathers in the deſert, who would every day carry ſtones from one Mountain to another upon their Shoulders, having no painful exerciſes to be employ'd in, for the benefit of their Neighbour: Seeing they were in the Deſert, yet would they be doing ſome Laborious Action, to chaſtiſe their Bodies through Penitence: And the Apoſtle ſays of himſelf (*l*), *I chaſtiſe my Body that I may bring it into Subjection.*

§. 68. But thoſe of our days who profeſs they would be true Chriſtians, proceed in a quite contrary ſtrain; and when they deſign to come to live with me, in order to their being true Chriſtians, they do inform themſelves rather, what they ſhall Eat and Drink, and how they ſhall be conveniently lodged, than what they muſt do that they may become good Chriſtians. Whence they themſelves ought to diſcover the fraud of their own Hearts, and conclude with the Scripture (*m*), That *there is not any thing more deceitful than the Heart of Man.* For what greater deluſion can there be, than that Men ſhould both themſelves believe, and make others believe it alſo, that they have a mind to be Jeſus Chriſt's Diſciples and true Chriſtians, forſaking the World, that they may enter into the Houſe of God; while notwithſtanding they continue to be lovers of themſelves, and ſtudy to make their Bodies eaſie with conveniencies, providing it with the fineſt and beſt things to the utmoſt of their Power? Poor deceiv'd Chriſtians, that think to come to Paradiſe by the way of Hell! When I have already made it ſo evident, that there wants no more to Damn us, but only to follow the *Inclinations* of *corrupt Nature*, as nothing is more true.

§. 69. How then is it poſſible for Men to perſwade themſelves that ever they ſhall become true Chriſtians, ſo long

(l) 1 *Cor.* ix. 27. (m) *Jer.* xvii. 9.

as they continue Lovers of themſelves, and ſtudy the Satisfaction of their Corrupt Nature, which is no other than a Stinking Carrion, that muſt ſhortly rot in the Grave, and be reduced to nothing, out of which it came? Is it not a diſgrace for a Chriſtian to be at ſo much pains for the ſupport and entertainment of this Corrupt Nature, the Enemy of God? Were it not better to Love and Cheriſh the Workmanſhip of God that is in us, the divine Soul and glorious Body that God created, rather than this filthineſs that ſin has ſpread over the Work of God as Ruſt covers the Iron, and cannot be divided from it but by forcible and potent means? In this ſenſe it is that Jeſus Chriſt ſays, the (n) *Kingdom of Heaven ſuffers Violence, and the violent take it by force.* Not as if the Gates of Paradiſe were to be batter'd down with Cannon Shot, or other Temporal Violence, ſeeing nothing opens this Gate but Love; but corrupt Nature is not to be ſubdued, but by the violent means of contending with it and contradicting it. It is this that makes our Life a continual Warfare; for if we make no reſiſtance, it will drag our Souls down to Hell, depriving them of the Kingdom of Heaven. Wherefore he muſt be very Fooliſh, who thinks to be ſaved ſo long as he indulges the eaſe and conveniency of his Corrupt Nature, ſeeing it grows ſtrong and ruſhes on into all kinds of Evil and Sin, without reſtraint, like an unbridled Colt.

§. 70. But when this beaſtly Corruption is curb'd and contradicted, it ſubmits unto reaſon, and complies with the Will of God: not of it ſelf, but through the violence that is offered by the ſuperior part; for when this Corruption is ſubdued, it comes even to be uſeful to the ſuperior part of the Soul; wherefore we muſt not kill, but conform it unto the Will of God; as I have conquered many Perſons, who own'd they were bound to the Devil by formal Covenants, and yet I have conſtrain'd them to do God's Will in external things, not with their own good Will, but by Conſtraint and Violence, which was afterwards chang'd, through Cuſtom, into a good Habit. And I ſee the caſe is the ſame with corrupt Nature, when it is once ſubdued and overcome by inuring it to Actions that are contrary to it. At laſt it yields, and becomes entirely ſubſervient to Reaſon, which makes it do any thing which it pleaſeth, without any reſiſtance. Wherefore one may if he will, become a Chri-

(n) *Matth.* xi. 12.

ſtian

ſtian by doing Violence to his *corrupt Nature*, and never by any other Means.

§. 71. He has his Labour for his Pains, who ſeeks to find the means of Salvation any where, but in the Mortification of his *corrupt Nature*. When he has done all Works of Piety and Devotion, they are all but means to raiſe him to the Love of God; but theſe means are not the End, no more than a Ship which ſhould carry us to the deſign'd Port; if we ſtay in this Ship always, and will not ſet our Foot a Shoar, we are always in danger of being Shipwreck'd, or periſhing in our way. Wherefore I am grieved for even thoſe that mean well, to ſee them amuſing themſelves in building Churches, or holding Meetings to perſwade others to be converted unto God; when they themſelves are not truly converted, having no more but good Wills and pious Intentions, knowing nothing of the abſolute neceſſity of *Entirely renouncing their corrupt Natures*. Such Perſons have likewiſe eſſay'd to join themſelves with me, but found they were diſſappointed, not finding in my deportment any reſemblance of their exteriour devotions; becauſe God inſtructs me, that he has no longer any Pleaſure in theſe Services, but that they are rather an offence to him; becauſe the Devil has made himſelf Maſter of theſe apparent Sanctities, that by them he may amuſe the well meaning, who think they do ſervice to God by External Worſhip, and the ſeeming converſion of others; all which notwithſtanding is but vanity and amuſement obſtructing ones own perfection.

§. 72. For the Chriſtians like the Jews have retain'd no more but (o) *The Letter that Killeth*, according as is Written, and inſtead of raiſing up Souls unto Life by the Practice of theſe Ceremonies, and publick Prayers and Preachings, they throw them into a Mortal Lethargie, which conducts them in a liſtleſs Sleep to Hell, when they imagin they are in the way to Paradiſe becauſe of their good Works, which only puff up their Hearts with Pride, by giving them Satisfaction, or rather by ſatisfying corrupt Nature it ſelf, which thinks it ſelf Happy, if by its Admonitions or Entreaties it fancies it has converted a Man unto God, or recovered him from an outwardly Debauched Life, to ſet him into its rote of exteriour Devotions, tho' in effect this Man is in a much worſe ſtate after ſuch a converſion, than he was during his groſs Debaucheries, when he knew himſelf to be a great ſinner; humbling himſelf both before God and

(o) 2 *Cor.* iii. 6.

Man, whereas after his Converſion he does but Glory in the Vertues he thinks he has acquir'd by theſe external Devotions.

§. 73. Wherefore God will put an end to all ſuch Worſhip which Men have ſo much abus'd, that it is become an abomination unto God. It is of our days, that God ſays by his Prophet (*p*), *I will ſpread the Dung of their Sacrifices in their Faces.* He alſo Teaches me in like manner to forſake all theſe ſhows of Sanctity, to Worſhip him only in Spirit and in Truth, as he ſaid to the Woman of *Samaria, That he would* (*q*) *no more be Worſhipped in the Temple, nor upon the Mountain, and that the true Worſhippers ſhould Worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth.* For this reaſon we have no publick Exhortation nor Prayer in our Society, nor any thing that reſembles the external Worſhip of God; every one Prays by himſelf, according as is his devotion. Nay, when we Eat, we have no vocal Grace; becauſe I obſerved that ſuch Exerciſe was commonly accompanied with Affectation, ſo as the Tone and Geſture had more of Piety in them, than was in the Heart; and fearing Hypocriſie, I prohibit ſuch vocal Graces, appointing every one to perform them in ſilence.

§. 74. I know very well that all theſe things that I do by divine Inſpiration, will offend thoſe Perſons that will ſtill be reforming the World, by outward Worſhip; they reſembling the Phariſees, who being Ambitious to have all under their own Management, and unwilling that any ſhould do better than themſelves, were always offended with Jeſus and his Apoſtles Actions, becauſe they did not do as theſe Phariſees did. And the Chriſtian Church being now worſe than Phariſaical, God intends to remove all theſe External means which they have abus'd in profaning Holy things.

§. 75. What abuſes do we ſee committed in their *going to Church*, Gayer in their apparel, than if they were deſign'd for the Play-houſe? The Preachers alſo are no better than Comedians, ſtudying their Words and Geſtures for the Pleaſure and Satisfaction of their Hearers. What abuſes do we alſo ſee in the Uſe of the Sacraments! Men approach to the *Lord's Table*, as if it were a Wedding Feaſt, with all the Pomp that may be, and tho' it is Written, (*r*) *He that Eats my Fleſh unworthily receives his own Judgment*, none conſiders his own Unworthineſs, coming to this Table with

(*p*) *Mal.* ii. 3. (*q*) *Joh.* iv. 21. (*r*) 1 *Cor.* xi. 29.

an Air of Aſſurance, and a Soul loaded with Sins which they have no mind to part with. Wherefore, inſtead of the Body of Chriſt, as they believe, the Devil enters into them, as he did into *Judas*. I ſay nothing of Confeſſion, the Abuſes of which are ſo groſs that we may ſee them with our Eyes, and feel them with our Hands. And when I conſider Baptiſm, (as 'tis commonly practis'd) I find nothing therein but Diſſimulation and Vanity. Men go in great Parade to the Solemnity, and in the Child's Name promiſe it ſhall be a Chriſtian, ſhall renounce the Devil and the World, with the Pomps of it. But after the Water of Baptiſm is Sprinkled upon the Infant, they think no more of their Promiſes, and Train up the Child to the Vanities of the World, to eſteem and Recommend it ſelf; yea to Avenge it ſelf of thoſe that offend it, reminding it as little as may be that it is engag'd by Baptiſm to be Jeſus Chriſt's Diſciple: Tho' Baptiſm is nothing elſe but an outward Sign, that the Perſon is a Chriſtian, liſted under the banner of Chriſt Jeſus, to be a Soldier under this Captain. And if the Perſon Engag'd in Baptiſm does not fulfil the Promiſes he has made therein, this Baptiſm will ſerve to his greater Condemnation. As if a Soldier once Liſted under a Captain, ſhould afterwards Deſert, having no mind to Fight under his Banner, he would be Puniſh'd or put to Death for his infidelity: So without doubt ſhall the Perſon that is Baptiz'd, and does not fulfil his Baptiſmal Engagements, incur a ſeverer Condemnation, than one that has not been Baptiz'd. The Water of Baptiſm ſignifying nothing to one who will not be a Chriſtian, except it be to bear Witneſs to the falſe Promiſes he has made to God.

§. 76. In Jeſus Chriſt's time there were two Baptiſms, the One of Water and the other of Fire. *John's* was the Water-Baptiſm of Repentance, which he Preach'd to Men as the true means of their Salvation; and thoſe who did not perſevere in the Penitence that St. *John* taught them, his Baptiſm ſignified nothing unto them; no more than the Baptiſm with Fire will do, which was the Apoſtles Baptiſm, who Baptized with the Holy Ghoſt, which they had received in the form of Tonguesof Fire. Theſe Baptiſms have been united into one, this Baptiſm of Fire containing likewiſe in it the Baptiſm of Repentance; which *John* had Preach'd before that time: For we muſt not deceive our ſelves; we ſhall not receive the Holy Spirit by the Baptiſm of Fire, if we are not at the ſame time Baptiz'd with the Baptiſm of Repentance which St. *John* Preach'd, ſeeing he that is not Penitent ſhall Periſh, according to Jeſus Chriſt's Words, ſaying to all without Exception,

Exception, (r) *Except ye Repent, ye ſhall all Periſh.* And it is Impoſſible for one to be a true Chriſtian, if he will not take the trouble to contend againſt his *corrupt Nature*; for theſe Baptiſms have no Vertue in themſelves without the inward Diſpoſition of the Soul, being no more but External ſigns of what the Perſon is within. And when the Perſon is truly Penitent, he may be Baptiz'd with *John's* Baptiſm, as when he has in his Soul an Efficacious deſire of being a Chriſtian, and is Regenerated in the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, and has contended with and Conquered his Corruption, he may be Baptiz'd with the Baptiſm of Fire, and receive the Holy Spirit. Without theſe Conditions Baptiſm will ſignify no more to them, than it would do if you Baptiz'd a Dog; but would Wound the Soul of the Baptiz'd Perſon, rendering him Perfidious before God, and a Hypocrite before Men, by aſſuming to himſelf the Title of Penitent and Chriſtian, when he is neither one nor other. Such are almoſt all thoſe that are Externally Baptiz'd now; they have nothing in them reſembling either a Penitent or True Chriſtian, nor ſo much as an Inclination to practiſe any thing that would make them ſuch; ſeeking rather to Live a pleaſant and Libertin Life after the Fleſh, than to endure Tribulation according to the Spirit.

§. 77. Thus do Men Abuſe this Sacrament of Baptiſm, as they do alſo the Sanctification of the *Sabbath*, ſolemnizing it only by the commiſſion of much Sin, ſo as it ought to be call'd a *Day of Sin*, rather than of *Solemn-Worſhip*; there being much more Sin committed on this, than other common Days, when Men apply themſelves to Labour for the neceſſaries of Life, whereas on *Sundays* they indulge their Sloth and idleneſs, which Engenders all kinds of Sin: Pompous Pride, Drunkenneſs, Luxury and Gluttony are on no other Days ſo much Indulg'd as on *Sundays*. 'Tis then Men Walk and take their Diverſion, and give looſe Reins to their *corrupt Nature* in Debauches, and Senſualities; in Detraction and Derogation from their Neighbour, as if Men thought to Honour God by more frequent Sinning on the Sabbath than on other common Days. To ſuch a Degree have Chriſtians Abuſed Holy things, as God will now deprive them of them, that henceforth Men may Worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth.

§. 78. But thoſe Phariſaical Spirits deſiring to maintain what God will demoliſh, will not Approve his Deſigns, and

(r) *Luke* xiii. 3.

continually reproach me, for not obſerving the Sabbath, as the Phariſees of old did Jeſus Chriſt, when he, exerciſing himſelf in neceſſary Works and Charity to his Neighbour, was doing better than obſerving the Sabbath. But the Conſciences of the preſent Chriſtians are now ſo erroneous, that they eſteem the Good to be Evil, and the Evil Good; and withal eſteem themſelves Juſt and Clear ſighted. Of ſuch the Scripture ſays, (s) *They have Eyes, and ſee not; they have Ears, and hear not*: And elſewhere, (t) *They ſay, We ſee; which is the reaſon they are blind: For if they ſaid, we are blind, they ſhould ſee clearly.* They take apparent Vertues for the real, and thus are themſelves impos'd upon, and do alſo deceive others, becauſe they have not found out wherein the true Goodneſs conſiſts; that it is, *The denying ones ſelf, and giving up ones ſelf entirely unto the Will of God.* Men may eaſily go to Church, frequent the Sacraments, be Baptized and Communicate, Pray, and Sing Praiſes; they may Faſt and Watch, and give their Goods to the Poor; ſeeing the Devil himſelf can do all this, but they cannot give up their Wills unto the Will of God; becauſe the Pride that reſides in the ground of the Souls of Men and Devils, is too much wedded to their Corruption, to be willing to part with it, or to ſuffer it to give way, or be ſubjected unto any thing. They make more account of their own Wills, than they do of the Empyrean Heavens and all their Glories. Theſe Perſons have no diſpoſitions to become Chriſtians, or Children of God, no more than to be with me. Though they had the Gift of Prophecy and Miracles, though they could ſpeak with the Tongue of Angels, and had Power to remove Mountains, and ſhould give all their Goods to Maintain the Poor; all this could not qualifie them to be God's Children, if with all theſe they had not alſo the Grace of *Self-denial*; which ſo long as they are unwilling to Practiſe, all their Vertues are but Vanity, and their faireſt outward Appearances, but empty Hypocriſie.

§. 79. Wherefore I entreat all thoſe that are thus diſpos'd, that they may not trouble my Repoſe, nor deſire to be with me, ſeeing we ſhould be but unprofitable Exerciſes to one another: For I never miſs to contradict the *Corruption of ones own Will* and Judgment, which unmortify'd Perſons cannot bear; nor would it be to any Advantage to their Souls to hear my Reproofs in their murmuring Humour; inſtead of Correcting the Faults I ſhould reprove in them, the Spirit of Revenge

(s) *Matth.* xiii. 13. (t) *Joh.* ix. 41.

would

would make them apply themſelves rather to ſeek for Faults in me, or for ſome un-poliſh'd Words or Actions wherewith to Reproach me. Theſe Perſons are too forward to come as Inſtructors or Directors to me, who have found a God to direct and inſtruct me in all my ways. 'Tis not for Men to Correct his Wiſdom, nor Contradict his Decrees. He only is my Teacher and Maſter, ſo as I have no need of erring Men, who often preſume to be Wiſer than the Wiſdom of God, as I have obſerved in many, who would rather be Maſters than Diſciples to the Holy Spirit, by which I am govern'd; and would continually be giving me Rules, Orders, or Inſtructions, how I ought to regulate my Affairs as to what is Eternal: Which is a thing very ridiculous, that when they had expreſs Knowledge that I am govern'd by the Holy Spirit, they would not ſubmit to it, but rule over it by the corruption of their Spirits; which are not able to do any thing but Sin; and yet they would be giving Laws to God's Spirit, and doing things directly contrary to the Poverty and Lowlineſs of Jeſus Chriſt. Some are offended becauſe we uſe Earthen Plates, when we are Rich enough to have them of Silver, as eaſily as others can have them of Pewter or Tin. But ſuch, like the Gentiles, take the Lowlineſs of Jeſus Chriſt to be Fooliſhneſs. Poor Chriſtians! They are yet far from the Kingdom of Heaven: Nay, they are not ſo much as in the way that leads to it; they are advancing in (*u*) *The broad way that leads to Perdition.* Let theſe Perſons retire and remove themſelves from the New Church, ſeeing they will not qualify themſelves for it; and (I ſhould be afraid) would ſerve rather to deſtroy than to build it up, were I not told that it's ſaid in the Apocalypſe, (*x*) *There was great War in Heaven*, which no queſtion is the Militant Church; *And that the Good Angels fought againſt the Bad*; and *that theſe laſt did not prevail, but were caſt down to the Earth, and no more found in Heaven*; that is, in the Houſe of God.

§. 80. It is with Joy that I wait and wiſh for this Combat againſt the Evil Angels, in which the Good Angels ſhall have the better, throwing the Wicked down to the Earth, ſo as they ſhall not any more deceive the Children of God. Then ſhall we have ground to ſing joyful Hallelujahs: But ſo long as the Wicked reign, there will be nothing to be ſeen in the Church of God, but Troubles, Emulations, and Perſecutions rais'd by the Wicked, the Devil's Partiſans, which are his Sorcerers and contracted Servants. And ſo long as ſuch

(u) *Matth.* vii. 13. (x) *Rev.* xii. 7, 8, and 9.

Perſons are in the Houſe of God, there will be nothing but War betwixt the Good Spirit and the Bad. Perſons that are entirely given up to the Will of God, are the *Good Angels*; and thoſe who are reſolv'd to follow their Corrupt Nature, are the *Evil Angels*. And it is requiſite that theſe ſhould, the one of them Fight with the other, ſeeing none can give way to the Evil; without being ſome way or other acceſſory to it, either by conſenting with it, or not hindering it when it is in their power ſo to do.

§. 81. The tender Conſciences of this Age are likewiſe ſometimes offended that I am not always at Peace with my Children in the Houſe of God; thinking, that except we live in conſtant peace we cannot pleaſe God, which is a great miſtake; for in truth, we muſt always as much as poſſible War againſt the Evil: For the Scripture ſays expreſsly, *Be Angry and Sin not*. I pray you, Children of God, with whom may one be Angry, if not with thoſe who profeſs their deſign to be Chriſtians, and in purſuance of this, have abandoned the World, to join themſelves with the Church of God, and yet would be living there after the Motions of Corrupt Nature? Theſe I muſt ſtrive againſt with all my might, becauſe they are ſtumbling Blocks unto Others, who might readily imitate them, if they did not know that I am continually chiding and reprimanding thoſe who indulge *the Inclinations of Corrupt Nature*: For though ſome may have in ſome meaſure ſubdued *this Corruption*, yet is it not ſo altogether mortified, but it revives with the ſight of unmortified Objects. Wherefore I look upon this to be a Grace that God has given me to fit me to govern others; namely, to reprove Vice, and chide thoſe that do Evil, yea, even with rough Language; ſince the High Prieſt *Eli* was viſited with ſudden Death for being ſo ſoft and gentle in Reprimanding his Children. But theſe blind Perſons having no knowledge of God's ways, are ſcandaliz'd even at Vertue it ſelf, and would have it to be fram'd to the ſoftneſs of their eaſy Tempers, and not to God's Juſtice, which croſſes their Corrupt Nature, that would be always at Peace, even with the Evil, as well as the Good: For Reſt and Repoſe, is more Senſual than Trouble or Anger; and this proceeds from the Love we bear to our Selves, and the little Charity we have for our Neighbour, that we do not reprove his Faults, which, it may be, he would never know of himſelf, becauſe the Heart of Man is ſo very deceitful. And hence it is a double Vertue, *To be Angry with the Evil, and not to Sin*, as God commands. It is alſo Charity to our Neighbour to keep him from doing all the Evil that he would do, if he were not contradicted. §. 82.

§. 82. My *Corrupt Nature* would willingly, like other Senſual Perſons, dwell always in Peace; for there is trouble in *being Angry and not Sinning*. Did I ſuffer every one to Live at their Pleaſure, this would be a means to get my ſelf to be more lov'd and eſteem'd: For all Men naturally love to be ſooth'd, and left in peace and quiet, without Contradiction or Reproof. And I know all theſe Senſualiſts would think me a good Mother, if I allowed them to follow their own Will, though all that *Corrupt Nature* wills, is moſt aſſuredly always Evil, and never any good thing can come of it, as I have already ſo frequently aſſerted. If I give way to this, I muſt alſo give way to Evil and Sin; and conſequently deſcend into Hell with my Children, which is none of my Intention. I had rather they ſhould periſh without me than with me; or that they ſhould live in the World, rather than be with me, if they are not deſirous to be rebuk'd and corrected for their Faults; it being the greateſt Favour that I can do them, to reprove them for their Failings, and not to be at Peace with them until they are reclaim'd, and do that which is Good: For this Peace with Evil, is not the Peace that Jeſus Chriſt came to give to the World; on the contrary he ſaid, (a) *I am not come to give Peace unto the World, but War and the Sword, between Parents and Children; Brothers againſt Brothers; and Husband againſt Wife*: Saying expreſsly, *I do not give you my Peace, ſuch as the World gives it.*

§. 83. For the World gives Peace in Evil-doing. We ſee nothing better according, and more in Peace, than Evil-doers aſſembled to do Evil. Thoſe Perſons who Flatter one another in Wickedneſs, they are in Peace and Good Agreement among themſelves. This is the Peace that the World gives. But the Peace which Jeſus Chriſt gives, is a Peace among Saints and Perſons that have renounc'd their Corruption. Theſe have the Peace which Jeſus Chriſt brought to his own Friends, which ſettles a calm and tranquil ity in their Souls. And tho' they be outwardly attack'd by the Wicked, yet are they nevertheleſs in Peace within themſelves; their Perſecutions do not trouble them, ſeeing they always preſerve in themſelves that Peace which Jeſus Chriſt has given them; which abundantly fills and ſatisfies their Souls. But the Peace which the World giveth, is falſe; and not only damns Men, but troubles and diſcompoſes their Underſtandings: For to be in this Worldly Peace, we muſt co-operate with all kinds of Sin; whence we may conclude that Jeſus Chriſt is not come to

(a) *Matth.* x. 34. *Joh.* xiv. 27.

give Peace as the World giveth it; and that he rather presents us a Sword to Combat this unhappy Peace that the World gives. But yet because I would smite with this Sword, and reprimand the Evil, I am condemn'd as Evil; and have been told, that 'twould do better to treat my Children more gently; a thing which my Corrupt Nature would be willing to do, as being extremely enclin'd to Mildness and Peace. And I confess, I have often been reproach'd by my Conscience, for having complied and acquiesc'd too much with Persons doing Evil, whom I durst not resist, for human Respects, and because I was desirous to be belov'd by all.

§. 84. But since God has given me his Holy Spirit, and the Gift of Fortitude also with it, I think it my Happiness to reprove Sin, as God commands me, without any fear of Man. If some are displeas'd with this, I am in no concern about it; I leave them to make what judgment they please of me: And if upon the account of my Severity they are afraid to Live with me, they may do in this as they think fit: For my own part, I seek for none, nor have I any occasion for Company, except it were to make me uneasie, and to create me care and trouble, which I have already in abundance. I would chuse rather the occasions of being alone, to see no Body in my whole Life; because all are a hindrance to me, interrupting my Conversation with God; so that I cannot wish to have so much as one Person with me; having never yet found any that were willing to deny themselves, that they might be entirely subjected unto the Will of God, and become his Children: For having admitted many Persons of both Sexes to live with me, I have found them all to be Lovers of themselves, studying their own proper Conveniencies, and more dispos'd to govern, than to give up themselves to be govern'd by the Spirit of God, so as they enclined to be my Masters, not my Disciples. But God alone being my Master, I have no occasion for any Person to be over me; and would be better pleased such Persons should stay where they are, than that they should come hither to break my Peace, and be Spies upon my Actions; taking offence at all I do that suits not with their Mind and Pleasure. These Pharasaical Spirits, (b) *have* Moses *and the Prophets, let them hear them*: They have Jesus Christ also, the greatest of all the Prophets, who in his Gospel teaches them every thing they ought to do, or leave undone, that they may be Christians. They are not Ignorant of this, for they make their boast of the Gospel, though by their Works they de-

(b) *Luk.* xvi. 29.

stroy

ſtroy and deſpiſe it. I have no cure for theſe Myſterious Perſons, who cannot tell what they deſign; who ſay they would be Chriſtians, and in effect continue Anti-Chriſtians. They may well amuſe themſelves and others thus, but they cannot deceive God, *who ſearches* (c) *the Reins, and tries the Conſcience*, condemning the Righteouſneſs of thoſe that would be juſtifying themſelves, but will ſhew Mercy unto ſuch as are upright in Heart, and are willing to become Children for the Kingdom of Heaven.

§. 85. Theſe are the Stones that ſhall be employed in this new Building of the Church of Chriſt; which Building, the falſe Chriſtians will Vigorouſly oppoſe, but ſhall not be able to hurt it: Though at preſent it ſeems to be very low, and none, or very few, beſtirring themſelves to ſupport it; yet nevertheleſs it ſhall prevail, and triumph over all the fury of Hell, which ſhall not have place herein any more, as the Scripture promiſes in many places; importing that this little Ship, *ſhall be in ſevere Tempeſts, but ſhall not be loſt*: And where it ſays, (d) *That in the Fight that was in Heaven, the Evil Angels did not prevail; that they were caſt down into the Earth, and were no more found in Heaven.* That is, Chriſtians fighting this good Fight, ſhall get the Victory, and caſt out of this New Church all the Wicked, and Hypocrites, who, like ſo many falſe Brethren, have inſinuated themſelves into the Church of God. Theſe ſhall all be caſt forth and none remain, but only the Children of God, all in a filial ſubjection to their Father. Then is the time that they ſhall reſt in Peace, and ſing the Joyful Allelujahs, and their Joy cannot be taken from them. But as long as the Wicked ſhall continue in the Houſe of God, the Good muſt be continually oppoſing them, without ever reſting, or ſo much as expecting Reſt until all the Wicked are overcome and exterminated.

VI.

Diſpoſitions for an Evangelical Life.

§. 86. BUT we muſt be *Children*, before we can be Soldiers in this Warfare. As Soldiers muſt firſt be weak Children, and their Strength gradually encreaſe with their Years, before they are fit to be Soldiers; ſo in like manner is it in this Spiritual Warfare. Men muſt firſt of all

(c) *Jer.* xvii. 10. (d) *Rev.* xii. 8, 9.

become

become Children, and abandon all the Human Wiſdom that they have acquired in the World by Study or by Speculation, theſe Sciences being all vain, and ſuch as keep the Holy Spirit from entring into their Souls. This was Jeſus Chriſt's Doctrine, ſpeaking to *Nicodemus*, one of the Learned Men of his Time; his very Words are, (*f*) *Verily, Verily, I ſay unto you, except ye be converted, and become as a little Child, you ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* This is an Aſſeveration with which Chriſt aſſures all the Learned by Truth it ſelf, that they ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, if they do not deſpiſe and forſake their Scholaſtick Sciences, in order to their becoming Children of God, which cannot be done on any other Terms; becauſe theſe Sciences, falſe as they are, puff up the Hearts of the Learned; and (*g*) *God reſiſts the Proud*, inſtead of giving them his Holy Spirit. And the Goſpel ſays in expreſs Terms, (*h*) *I will deſtroy the Wiſdom of the Wiſe, and bring to nothing the Underſtanding of the Prudent.*

§. 87. If God is reſolved to deſtroy their Wiſdom, muſt we not hence conclude, that he will not build his new Church with the Wiſe? They muſt, if they would be Chriſtians, renounce their Wiſdom, parting with all this Prudence and Human Regards, that they may grow to be ſincere and ſimple as an Infant. I ſee no other Remedy for the Wiſe or Learned, but that they ſimplifie their Minds, and give them up entirely to the Goſpel-Simplicity; for as long as they continue wiſe in themſelves, they cannot become Children, and not being Children, Jeſus Chriſt ſays, *They ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Either then they muſt renounce their Human Wiſdom, or go to Hell, there being only Two Places for us all at laſt to come to, which are Hell and Paradiſe. Theſe wiſe Men may chuſe which of the Two they like beſt. If they reſolve to ſtick by their Learned Sciences, they ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven; but if they deſpiſe them for the Kingdom of Heaven, they ſhall reap great Advantage; if they ſubject their Sciences to the Will of God, he may make uſe of them as far as he pleaſes, for his own Glory, and the Salvation of Mens Souls. For Example, My Skill in Writing is a Science that God makes uſe of for declaring his Truth unto others; but if I aſſum'd any thing to my ſelf in my Writing, God would be offended at my attributing unto my ſelf that which appertains unto God

(*f*) *Matth.* xviii. 3. (*g*) *Jam.* iv. 6. (*h*) *Iſai.* xxix. 14. 1 *Cor.* i. 20.

alone,

alone, Man having nothing in himſelf but Sin, and all the Good he doth coming only of God. This is what the Learned are not enough aware of, and therefore they ſhall have a greater Difficulty to ſubject their Spirits unto the Goſpel-Simplicity, and to what I am to ſay from God unto them, than illiterate Perſons, who have nothing near ſo much to conquer and part with, that they may become Chriſtians.

§. 88. For the Unlearned are more pliable; and apter to receive Impreſſions of the Truth that God declares at this Preſent; becauſe their contrary Sentiments are not ſo deeply rooted, as in the Hearts of thoſe who have conſumed their whole Life in thoſe Studies that to them appear to be the beſt, ſome in the Law, others in Divinity, Medicine, or other Sciences; and now hearing that the Truth of God ſhocks their Learning, which they always look'd upon to be good, yea perfect; they find it very hard to deſpiſe what they have formerly ſo much eſteem'd. Yet when they reflect, that (*i*) *The Kingdom of Heaven ſuffers Violence, and the Violent take it by Force*; this takes off from the Difficulty. I have known a certain Learned Man, who no ſooner diſcover'd the Truths that I declared unto him from God, but he preſently yielded, and ſaid, *We are deceived, and have deceived others; this is the Truth. I reject and deſpiſe all that I have learned of Men, as Learning that is not from God. I am reſolv'd to follow the Goſpel-Simplicity*; which he did in effect. But ſuch Perſons are very rare; probably it is becauſe Ambition is annex'd to Learning, that ſo few Learned Men are to be ſeen in the New Church, which will retain none but Children; for though others may enter in, yet ſhall they not ſtay, but ſhall at laſt be purged out, as unworthy to remain in it, tho' they have been tollerated for ſome time for an Exerciſe to the Good, until they are ſufficiently purified.

§. 89. I am at this preſent time engaged in theſe Combats; for I have ſome with me that contradict me upon every Occaſion, and would fain find Reaſon on their Side, diſputing to ſhew it is the Truth of God that is in the wrong, and not their own Caprice which gives me abundance of Trouble; to ſee, that after they are convinced in their Souls that the Spirit of God governs me, they will ſtill be controuling his Government, ſeeing it is he that does all in me, and I do nothing of my ſelf, and may ſay with the Apoſtle, (*k*) *It is not any more I that live, but Chriſt that lives in me.* He who

(*i*) *Matth.* xi. 12. (*k*) *Gal.* ii. 20.

teaches

teaches me is the ſame that guides me, and leads me in all his Ways, though thoſe well-meaning Perſons cannot follow them, but fly in the Face of his Conduct; ſo far does the Devil prevail over the Spirits of thoſe, who cannot give up their own Knowledge, but will be thinking it more expert than the Divine Wiſdom, eſpecially in Temporal Things; ſo full are they of themſelves, that they have no Regard for any other.

§. 90. The Reaſon of this is: Man was created in the Beginning ſo wiſe, that he knew all Nature, order'd every thing as himſelf beſt pleaſed, and all obey'd him as their Lord. But ſince his Rebellion againſt God, and ſetting his Affections upon things that are not God, he is become groſs and ignorant, having often leſs Knowledge and Conduct in his own Affairs than the Beaſt; and yet he will ſtill be governing and commanding, as he did when he was wiſe, eſpecially thoſe that pretend to Wit or Learning. Theſe have always a ſecret Ambition to excel others, they cannot yield or ſubmit their Spirits to the Wiſdom of God himſelf, imagining they know ſeveral things better than he does. This happens frequently in our Community, when I order any thing in the Matter of Houſe-keeping, as God enjoins me, they imagine I am deluded, eſpecially if I command them Things to which their Nature finds any Repugnancy. Then do they begin to clamour and contradict with many Reaſons and Arguments, which their corrupt Nature ſuggeſts in its own Defence, and to make it be thought to have Reaſon on its Side. Yea, I have had ſome ſo very dull and ignorant, and more ſtupid than the Beaſts, who had the Confidence to tell me, I did not underſtand the Things, which not only the Light of God, but Experience had given me perfect Knowledge of, and yet they were perſwaded they knew them better than I did.

§. 91. This convinced me, that theſe Perſons were not in a Diſpoſition to become Children unto God, it being the Duty of ſuch to ſimplifie their Spirits, and ſubmit unto all that is enjoin'd them, if it is not Sin. Some holy Perſons have exerciſed their Novices in this, for the Mortification of the Pride of the Human Spirit, which would ſtill be commanding as if it were wiſe. Thus we have heard that St. *Francis* order'd one of his Novices to plant Coleworts, the Leaves in the Ground, and the Root in the Air; and the Novice replying only, That it would be better to plant the Root in the Ground, he forthwith turn'd him out of the Convent, ſaying, *Go, my Child, you are too wiſe to be here, and to be a*

true

true Chriſtian. For Jeſus Chriſt's Diſciples ought humbly to comply with every thing that is enjoin'd them from God, without Reply or Exception. It is not the Diſciple's Buſineſs to be wiſer than his Maſter.

§. 92. If a Superior is not led by the Spirit of God, we are not bound to obey him; but if he is, it is our Duty to obey him in every thing, ſetting aſide Sin, which we may be ſure he will never require of us: Excepting this, the Novice muſt be abſolutely obedient in every other thing; yea, though he may have more Skill in ſome things than his Superior has, yet ought he to forego his own Knowledge, and meekly obey his Superior's Commands, ſeeing this will infallibly conduce to the Perfection of his Soul; and God has by frequent Miracles and Virtues annex'd to ſuch Commands, ſhown how much he is pleaſed with this abſolute Obedience. We have a Story of a young Novice, who conveying his Superior ſome way out of his Convent, ask'd him what Exerciſe he ſhould take for his Mortification during his Abſence? His Superior ſays to him, *You ſhall come to this Place twice a Day with Water to water my Staff,* (a dry Stick in his Hand) and when the Novice demanded, How long he muſt continue to do this? the Superior replied, *Until this dry Stick flouriſhes.* Without any more to do, the Novice ſet himſelf to do as he was commanded, and in a few Weeks the Staff began to bud forth and flouriſh, and was by the time the Superior return'd miraculouſly grown to be a goodly Tree. He bleſs'd God, who had approv'd of the Novice's blind Obedience by ſo evident a Miracle. There is yet a more wonderful Relation of an Abbot of *Anchorets*: As he was upon an Occaſion buſie with his Diſciples in making Bread for the Convent, he was accoſted by a young Man, that was deſirous to be received into their Society. The Abbot told him, *That none could remain in their Society, but only thoſe who had entirely abandon'd their own Will, and were in every thing obedient to the Commands that were laid upon them.* The young Man having indeed a Diſpoſition to do this, told him reſolutely, *Command me what you pleaſe, my Father, I am fully determined to do it.* Then the Abbot, that he might make Trial of him, ſays, *Go then thruſt your ſelf into that Oven.* It was then burning hot, ready for the Bread to be put in it. The Abbot deſigned only to try him, reſolving to ſtop him, if he found him in good earneſt reſolved to put his Orders in Execution: But the young Man, being nimbler than he, quickly leapt into the Oven before the Abbot could prevent him. The good Father was much afflicted with the

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Accident, and commanded his Diſciples to take the young Man out of the Oven, concluding that he muſt be quite ſcorch'd; but he was found untouch'd and entire, not a Hair of his Head or Cloaths burnt or ſinged: Which gave them all Occaſion to praiſe God, who by ſuch a Miracle had ſhown how much he approves of ready uncontroverted Obedience. In the ſame Fathers likewiſe, we hear of a young Novice, who was committed to the Care of an old peeviſh Hermit, to teach him to read. The Hermit beat him moſt cruelly when he wanted any thing in his Leſſon, ſo as he became deaf of one Ear, and humbly pray'd his Maſter to beat him on the other Side, becauſe he had loſt his Hearing on that Side. Shortly after the Novice died, and when he had been buried for ſome time, one of the old Man's Friends coming to ſee him, enquired after his Scholar, and hearing that he was dead, pray'd him to lead him to his Grave, which the old Man readily granted. When they were both at the Grave, the Friend calls unto him, and ſays, *Brother, are you dead?* To which the young Man made Anſwer from his Grave, *No, my Father, they that are truly obedient never die; ſuffer me to reſt in God.* This wrought ſo powerfully upon the old Man his Maſter's Heart, that he left his own convenient Cell, and went and built him a poor one upon his Diſciples Grave, whom he confeſs'd he had kill'd by his Severity and rude Treatment, and ſpent the Remainder of his Life there in Tears and Penitence for his Cruelty to his young Diſciple, ſaying oft-times with Grief and Remorſe, *I have killed my Brother, Lord forgive me this Murther.* Thus did this blind Obedience make both the Maſter and his Diſciple Saints; they both attain'd the Kingdom of Heaven by the Violence of a holy Penitence.

§ 93. I have related theſe Three Examples as agreeing perfectly with what God teaches me, who will not admit any into his new Church, but only thoſe that have entirely abandon'd their own Self-will, that they may let themſelves be govern'd by God alone. I do not hereby require any Perſon to pay any Obedience leſs or more unto me; I am not willing to rule over any; and I utterly diſapprove of thoſe who give themſelves up to a blind Obedience to any Creature; for it frequently falls out, that the Perſon directed is more vertuous than the Director. And for this Reaſon I would not adviſe any of my Friends to ſubject themſelves unto me, or to any other Creature, ſo long as thoſe that expect ſuch Submiſſion from them are yet following the Motions of their corrupt Nature, except they do this for a Mortification

tification to their own Corruption; and in this caſe they muſt beware not to comply with any Commands contrary to God's Law, or the Goſpel-Counſels: For whatever is of God is agreeable to the Goſpel-Law, and he that teaches otherwiſe is a Devil, whom we ought not to hear, and much leſs to obey. But if ye meet with one that knows God's Will inducing others to comply with it, follow and obey that Perſon in all that he delivers unto you from God, until ſuch time as ye your ſelves come to know the Will of God; and in the mean while pray God that I may always ſpeak as I am taught; as *Moſes*'s People ſaid, (*l*) *Speak thou* Moſes *unto us, and not the Lord.*

§. 94. But now Mens Hearts are proud enough to ſay, *Speak thou thy ſelf, Lord, and ſuffer not a Woman to teach in thy Name.* They run in the contrary Strain, and will have God to lead them in their own Faſhion, and not as pleaſes his holy Will, though his Decrees are unchangeable, and Mens Wills are evermore changing and unconſtant. And therefore it is in vain for Men to hope to be Chriſtians, ſo long as they follow their proper Wills, or will have God to govern them to their own Minds and Inclinations.

§. 95. I am perſwaded, the greateſt part of Mankind is damn'd for not ſubmitting their own Wills to the Will of God. This is the Plague that deſtroys their Souls; this is the Chain wherewith the Adverſary inſenſibly draws Perſons of the beſt Intentions down into Hell; when he can perſwade them that their proper Will is not evil, after that they preſume on their Salvation without ground: For there needs no more to damn any Perſon, than to follow his own Will; ſeeing it is continually evil, it having been corrupted by *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion, doeſe ver ſince prompt us only to Unrighteouſneſs and Sin. Wherefore one that deſigns to pleaſe God, and to be a Chriſtian, ought not at any time, nor in any thing to follow his own Will, but rather to make it his conſtant Study to diſcover what is God's Will, that he may readily execute it, without calling in his own Will to conſult and examine if God's Will is good or evil: *'Tis enough if ye know it to be the Will of God; ye muſt not criticiſe, and canvaſs, and examine whether what God requires, reliſhes with our Senſuality, or is agreeable to the Motions of our corrupt Nature.* But ye are to obey God's Will with Joy and Gladneſs, rendring him continual Thanks, that he has not thought you unworthy of the Knowledge of his holy Will, and that he has given you a Deſire, and Strength to put it in Execution. For God's Will and Ways are more precious than all Earthly

(*l*) *Exod.* xx. 19.

Trea

Treaſures; nor are we ſo rich, or noble, or contented in any thing, as in accompliſhing the Will of God; and it muſt needs be a baſe degenerate Soul that cleaves to its own Will, after it comes to know the Will of God. I know ſome will falſely maintain, that they know not God's Will; but this will be no Excuſe, the Goſpel gives them the Lye. It is in this Goſpel, which we have conſign'd unto us for an Eternal Memorial in Writing, that we have the whole Will of God, together with the Means enabling us to the Practice of it, marked down and made plain to us.

§. 96. Wherefore I am not come to recommend any new Laws or new Means for accompliſhing God's Will; but rather only to remonſtrate againſt Men for their Slackneſs and Remiſſneſs with regard to this holy Law, which was inſtituted by Jeſus Chriſt himſelf; and becauſe inſtead of being *Chriſtians* they are become *Anti-Chriſtians*, walking in the Way that leads to Hell, inſtead of that which leadeth unto Paradiſe. Happy ſhall they be who will hearken to me, and follow me in the *Renovation of the Goſpel-Spirit*, ſeeing by no other means can any Perſon attain to the Salvation of his Soul. Men muſt be renew'd in the Spirit of the Primitive Church, and revive unto Jeſus Chriſt; or if not, muſt die the Death Eternal. Men may believe this as they pleaſe, every one muſt anſwer for himſelf: Yet none can revive, if he does not die unto himſelf; and none can be ſaved, if he is not reviv'd in the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt. And this is the laſt Mercy that God will ſhew unto Men; namely, that he will once more bring his Goſpel-Spirit to Life in the Earth. Thoſe that will not reſolve to live in this Spirit have received their Condemnation already, which Jeſus Chriſt pronounces in his Goſpel, ſpeaking partly of his own Time, but principally of theſe laſt Days, ſaying, (m) *This is their Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men have loved their own Darkneſs rather than the Light.*

(m) *John* iii. 19.

VII.

Indiſpoſitions for an Evangelical Life.

§. 97. THIS appears to be perfectly accompliſh'd in our Days, when the Light of Truth begins to ſhine brighter than ever it has done in the World, and yet Men will not receive it, preferring their own Darkneſs unto this Light, and chuſing rather to dwell in their own Ignorance and Blindneſs, than to receive this Light of Truth, which God ſo mercifully offers them, and which they, inſtead of acquieſcing in it, and receiving it with Joy, as a great Treaſure ſent from Heaven, do ſet themſelves againſt it, and contradict it: For what greater Happineſs is Man capable of, than to diſcover his own Blindneſs, and ſee the Way to have it remedied, ſo as to be clear-ſighted in the Matter of his Salvation? And yet Men ſhut their Eyes upon theſe Lights, and ſtop their Ears to the Divine Calls, and will not admit any thing into their Souls, but the Prejudices of their own Spirits. Though God knocks at the Door of their Hearts, yet are there but few that are willing to open to him, chuſing rather to cleave to their own Darkneſs, than to open the Eyes of their Underſtandings to ſee the Light of Truth, which God now offers unto them. For which reaſon they deſerve to be condemn'd, and by theſe Proceedings of theirs to receive their Sentence of Condemnation, ſuch an Ingratitude ſtanding ſelf-condemned without any other Judge. Wherefore thoſe Perſons that are now unwilling to receive the Light of Truth, ſhall undoubtedly periſh.

§. 98. For what more could God do to promote Man's Salvation, than to let him ſee ſo clearly how he is damn'd by Sin, and how he may be ſaved by reſuming an Evangelical Life? After this I ſee no more to be done on God's Part. It lies now upon Men to reſolve whether they will be ſaved by embracing the Evangelical Law; or whether they will be damned by continuing in the Darkneſs of their Self-loves. And there's no Time to be loſt, ſeeing the End is come, when God reſolves to renew his Goſpel-Spirit, by re-eſtabliſhing his Church in greater Perfection than ever it yet has been. But we are not to imagine, that he will create a new World or new Creatures to effect this; he will impartially make uſe of Perſons now alive, who will abſolutely renounce themſelves and their own Wills, and take up the

Croſs to follow Chriſt Jeſus. Theſe ſhall be Stones fitted for the Building of the (n) *New Jeruſalem that ſhall deſcend from Heaven*, fitting diſengaged Souls with the Graces and Vertues that are neceſſary for accompliſhing all the Duties of a truly Chriſtian Life: So as no Perſon can ſay with any Truth, that God has not given him Grace to embrace an Evangelical Life, ſeeing it is given unto all that truly deſire and demand it. There wants nothing now but a firm effective Reſolution. For *Velleities* and *Fain wou'd be's*, are not accepted with God. There muſt be, *I abſolutely will*. Without this he does not give his Grace, and the preſent predominant Evil among Men is, that they are contented if they have a good Will or *Velleity*, though I have written (as the Truth is) *That Good-wills (or Velleities) ſhall be burnt in Hell*; or rather, *That Hell is paved with Good-wills*. Wherefore let no Man deceive himſelf; we muſt come to Effects, or periſh Everlaſtingly. Children of God, if ye have a mind to ſave your Souls, lay hold of this good Occaſion before it paſſes, or before Death ſurprizes you, that ye begin not too late to knock at the Gate, with the fooliſh Virgins, and may not have their Repulſe, (o) *I know you not*. For notwithſtanding all the preſſing Inſtances of theſe fooliſh Virgins to be admitted to the Marriage-Feaſt, the Door was not open'd to them: For it was now ſhut, and they had neglected their Opportunity of coming when the Doors of the Marriage-Court were open.

§. 99. The ſet Time is this, wherein we live at this preſent, when God reſolves to finiſh the promiſed Alliance of his well-beloved Son with his Human Creature. All the Preparations are now compleated. The Oxen are killed, and all is in a Readineſs, ſeeing the Lord has ſent me to call them that were bidden, and to tell them, *The Time of the Marriage draws near: Let theſe that were bidden be in a Readineſs*. But, alas! there be very few ready to come at my Call. All lay hold of their Excuſes, that they may not come to the Marriage-Feaſt. One ſays, *He has a Wife and Children*; and that he cannot leave them, which is very true; and this ſhould oblige him to diſpoſe them to get themſelves ready to come with him to the Banquet. For if he loves them with a true Love, he will be as induſtrious to procure their Salvation as his own. This Affection to Wife and Children ought to prepare him ſtill more, and make him joyfully excite all that belong to him to be in a Readineſs with him.

(n) *Rev.* iii. 12. *Ibid.* xxi. 2. (o) *Matth.* xxv. 12.

This

This is what Men would certainly do, if Fleſh and Blood did not more affect them than the Kingdom of Heaven, for which they will not abandon their ſenſual Inclinations, chuſing rather a preſent Enjoyment of vile Tranſient pleaſures, than to wait in Abſtinence for Eternal pleaſures; and therefore they refuſe to come to the Marriage Feaſt; as do alſo thoſe Perſons who follow their Trades and Callings, that they may get Money. They reſemble thoſe in the Goſpel, (*p*) Who had *Purchaſed a Farm.* And therefore could not come to the Marriage Feaſt, tho' they were invited. Poor ſtupid Creatures! To prefer a little Temporal gain to Eternal Life, of which they make leſs reckoning than of a little Earthly Gain, that muſt all be parted with when they come to Die: Then their Souls muſt remain Void of all Vertue to appear before God's great Tribunal, where all theſe Earthly Poſſeſſions will appear like a little Duſt, and ſhall be of no uſe in the other World, but to weigh down and overcharge the Conſciences of thoſe that purchas'd them. Is not this a Poor excuſe for Mens not going to the Marriage Feaſt to which they are Bidden? Thoſe alſo that are enter'd into Publick Employments, and have Offices or Benefices, ſay they cannot leave their Poſts and Charges to Embrace an Evangelical Life, thinking themſelves Neceſſary for the Publick; tho' it was in good State before it had this Officer, and will be in no danger when he is gone. This is but one of Satan's Amuſements to keep them that are bidden from being preſent at the Wedding Feaſt, by ſuch Frivolous excuſes, which appear to have ſome Colour of Reaſon, tho' they are altogether falſe and unworthy of a Chriſtian, who ought always and in all Caſes to prefer his Salvation unto every Worldly concern, ſeeing Jeſus Chriſt ſays, in his Goſpel, (*q*) *He that Loves Father, Mother, Brother, Wife or Children, more than me, is not worthy of me.*

§. 100. Who is the Man, who having heard theſe Truths, will yet be detain'd from the Marriage Supper, for a Wife, Children, Oxen, Farms, and other Trifles; ſeeing all theſe things together cannot ſave him, or procure him Eternal Life and Happineſs? One that would be Saved, muſt be Diſengag'd from all theſe; wherefore a Chriſtian ſhould conſider what is Incumbent on him to do that he may ſave his Soul. He muſt abſolutely renounce all Earthly things, and make things Eternal his only Aim; otherwiſe he ſhall never attain them, and the Door will be ſhut againſt thoſe that excuſe themſelves

(*p*) *Matth.* xxii. (*q*) *Matth.* x. 37.

ſelves from going to the Marraige Supper now, and the Lord's Sentence will be pronounc'd againſt them, as it was againſt thoſe who pretended excuſes for their not coming to the Feaſt in the Parable; of whom it was ſaid, (r) *Of a Truth I declare that thoſe ſhall not Taſte of my Supper.* In like manner do I ſay unto all thoſe that are now at this time unwilling to receive the Light of Truth, or not willing to obey it for ſome trifling Reaſons of Tranſitory Goods, which God does not allow nor admit of, in as much as theſe Tranſitory Goods are not comparable to the Eternal. And he muſt be a mean Spirited Creature, that will put them in the Ballance with Eternal good things, to which there is nothing worthy to be compared; were we to part with a Thouſand Eſtates for theſe Eternal Felicities, were we to give up a Thouſand Trades and Callings for the Kingdom of Heaven, all theſe are not worth a Ruſh, if compared with the leaſt Felicity of Eternal Life. For what can Wives, Children, Eſtates, Gold, Silver, or other Poſſeſſions that ye have been Treaſuring up in the Earth with ſo much Care and Trouble, do for you when you come to Die? All theſe can be no ſupport to you in that laſt Extremity. You muſt go all alone to God's Judgment, and leave all behind you upon Earth; you cannot carry any thing away with you. Wherefore nothing is to be compar'd with Eternal Life: This never ends, and is the very top of all ſorts of Happineſs. What Folly then is it to pretend any Temporal Buſineſs to excuſe us from going to this Marriage Supper? Were it not better to Deſpiſe, yea to Reject all thoſe Tranſient concerns, than to come ſhort in this, for the Joys of a Wife or Children, for Trades or Employments, or Temporal Intereſts, which are only an Entertainment for this ſhort Life, that may poſſibly be concluded in a Year, or a Month, or a Week; nay, it may be in a Day, for no Man can promiſe himſelf another Day; tho' all Men are well aſſur'd, that after the Gate ſhall once be ſhut, they ſhall never have another opportunity of entring into the Marriage Feaſt. Seeing the Maſter of the Parable has Sworn, that thoſe that were bidden, and pretended Excuſes, *ſhall never Taſte of his Supper.*

§. 101. I am ſent out from God to call thoſe that are bidden to the Marriage Feaſt, and to tell them, the Supper is prepared, and they are requir'd to lay aſide all their Temporal Affairs, and get themſelves in a readineſs to come

(r) *Matth.* xxii. *Luke* xiv. 24.

to this Marraige Entertainment, where God is to Marry his Son with his Human Creature. All that have any Knowledge of the Goſpel, that is, all Chriſtians are invited to this Feaſt; and now the time is come, and he has ſent me to call them by my Writings, yea to be preſſing with all that are bidden, that they would prepare themſelves for this Marriage Supper, and Cloath themſelves with the Chriſtian Virtues, that they may not be turn'd out with that unwary Gueſt in the Goſpel, who had preſumptuouſly intruded himſelf without his Wedding Garment, of whom it was ſaid, (s) *Bind him Hand and Foot, and caſt him into outer Darkneſs.*

§. 102. Thoſe that are now call'd Chriſtians, pretend a mighty willingneſs to come to the Marriage Supper, but yet they are unwilling to part with the earthly things, that their Hearts are ſet upon. They would be for making up a very unſuitable Match between the Felicities of Heaven, and the pleaſures of Fleſh; or to ſay better, they would be *ſerving two Maſters*, God and their corrupt Nature; they would be cleaving to the one, without forſaking the other. Poor Ill-adviſ'd unthinking Creatures! To deſign Impoſſibilities, according to what Jeſus Chriſt himſelf ſays expreſsly in his Goſpel, (t) *Ye cannot ſerve two Maſters without ye be unfaithful to one or other.* And yet thoſe whom we now call Chriſtians would be Walking by a very different Rule, and ſerving God and the Devil both together. A Liberty that will not be allow'd in them, no more than it has ever been in any. It was always neceſſary for one that would be ſav'd to Renounce his corrupt Nature; no Man could ever do good, but he muſt firſt forſake Evil. Good and Evil are two things that can never Subſiſt together: This ought now to appear in full perfection in Perſons that would be Stones for the Building of the new Jeruſalem. They ought not to Love the things of this Life any more, but to place all their Affections in God alone, without deſiring any other thing under any Colour or Pretext whatſoever; ſeeing God will have no divided Hearts, but will have them Whole and Entire for himſelf. But every one is free to chuſe whether he will give his Heart wholly unto him or not, all Men in General being Created with a liberty of ſetting their Affections as themſelves like beſt: If they place them upon God, they ſhall have the reward that cannot be taken from them; and if they ſet them on any other thing than God, they ſhall for ſo doing reap the Curſe Denounc'd upon the Devil and his Angels. Man is in full

(s) *Matth.* xxii. 13. (t) *Matth.* vi. 24.

freedom to Deliberate what he will do in this matter, but muſt not think that he can deceive God by his Hypocriſies, or ſpecious ſhows of being a Chriſtian, when he is ſeeking himſelf, or any other Created thing; for God is not to be impoſed upon; he ſees through the diſguiſes by which Men impoſe upon themſelves or others. God ſuffers this for ſome time, that he may make trial of the Infidelity of thoſe that call themſelves his Diſciples, and yet are not ſuch ſo long as we ſee them ſeeking themſelves or other Creatures. For the Apoſtle, when he would diſtinguiſh Chriſtians from other Men ſays expreſsly, (u) *If ye are regenerated, ſeek thoſe things that are above, and not the things that are upon the Earth.* Now when we ſee one that is called a Chriſtian, ſtill ſeeking to get Money, and pretending to employments or dignities, to Charges or Benefices, we are ſure ſuch a Perſon is not regenerated; becauſe he is yet ſeeking the things that are upon the Earth. And if we ſee one ſtill aiming at his own Conveniencies, his eaſe or pleaſure, we may truly ſay that that Perſon ſeeks not the Kingdom of Heaven as Jeſus Chriſt ordain'd him, with a promiſe that, (x) *The other things ſhall be added unto him that ſeeks firſt the Kingdom of Heaven.*

§. 103. But theſe Poor Chriſtians truſt nothing to their Saviour's promiſes, they lay greater ſtreſs upon their Income, their Labour and Induſtry, than upon the promiſes of God, who never fails or diſappoints thoſe that ſerve him faithfully. But ſenſual Perſons live not by Faith; they ſay, *If we look not after our Commerce and Calling, or Trade, our Charges or Benefices, how ſhall we Live?* Theſe Perſons are altogether of this Earth, and have no Chriſtian Sentiments, ſeeing God ſays, That *he maintains the Fowls of the Air, that neither Sow nor Reap.* Will he not then take care of his Servants that cry Day and Night unto him? Are not their Souls of more value than a Sparrow or little Bird? Has not Jeſus Chriſt in his Goſpel ſaid unto Chriſtians, (z) *Take no thought for to Morrow.* And in another place, (a) *Labour not for the Meat which Periſheth, but for that which endureth to Everlaſting Life.* All which God's promiſes and admonitions are not now Current Coin among Nominal Chriſtians; they refuſe to truſt in God, chuſing rather to truſt to themſelves, or others like themſelves, from whom they hope for ſome

(u) *Col.* iii. 1. (x) *Matth.* vi. 33. (z) *Luke* xii. 24. (a) *John* vi. 27.

Aſſiſtance,

Assistance, forgetting what the Scripture says, (*b*) *The Just shall Live by faith; but if he draws back, my Soul has no pleasure in him.*

§. 104. How then should God take pleasure to build his new Church with Persons that are Lovers of themselves, whose whole business it is to heap up Money, or to take their Ease and Pleasure in this Life? These have already received their reward, and have nothing to pretend to in the new Church, where none shall enter but Mortified Souls, striving against their corrupt Nature, that they may be regenerate in the Spirit of Christ Jesus. There must be none of the complaints of corrupt Nature heard in the new Church; seeing Men ought to Enter there on Purpose to Cross and Mortify it, they should be glad to meet with matter of Mortification, and things to Cross and Chastise corrupt Nature, so far should they be from murmuring that they are too Hot or too Cold; that they are not well Cloath'd or Lodg'd; that their Meat is not right Cook'd to their Palate; that their Room is too little, or their Labour too hard, or any other thing of this Nature. It will be fit to turn such Murmurers out of the Society, in as much as they would set others a bad Copy by their complainings, and would not be any wise profited themselves: I have been much complain'd on for turning out so quickly some that I had received into my Society. These complaints have no Ground but in the Corrupt Imaginations of Men, who are not acquainted with God's ways, and judge rashly of his designs. But I have no regard to their Judgments, knowing that they are vain, and that their thoughts are not as God's thoughts, who has Commanded me, *To receive all that say they are willing to Embrace an Evangelical Life; but not to retain any Person who does not effectually set himself to the Observance of that Life.* This is the reason why I have rejected so many that have been desirous to Live with me; because I did not find them dispos'd to Embrace an Evangelical Life, but all fill'd with Self-love, and Self-seeking, and most part in Express compact with the Devil; so that I was obliged to discharge them entirely from coming to me, as I will yet do all those that I find of their Stamp, without any regard to the Murmurings of those ignorants, who find fault with what they ought to commend, and intrude themselves into other Peoples affairs, without any reason, which the Apostle highly Condemns, ranking such with Sorcerers and other Scandalous Sinners: In effect they

(b) *Heb.* x. 38.

are as much to be blam'd, ſeeing they meddle ſometimes in matters where God himſelf is Concern'd, as it falls out in my particular caſe: when my deſign is to accompliſh the Will of God, they will needs meddle to Croſs and Oppoſe it, rejecting his good deſigns as Evil; they would willingly oblige me to be of their Corrupt Opinion, inſtead of following the Will of God; thus imagining that their Fooliſh Wiſdom is Wiſer than the Wiſdom of God that Governs me. This makes me avoid ſuch ſtupid Ignorants, ſeeing I have no hopes of the Salvation of their Souls, and find they are a great hindrance to mine.

§. 105. Shall I continue in the Errour, in which almoſt all Married Perſons are at this preſent; who, though they are ſenſible that their Yoke-fellows, by inducing them to Sin and to doEvil, do turn them away from the Righteouſneſs of God, yet have not the courage to leave them, for fear they ſhould break the Marriage Vow, or commit Sacrilege, as ſome Chriſtians will have Marriage to be a Sacrament, and ſay, Marriages are made in Heaven; wherein they are under a great Miſtake, ſeeing the greater part of Marriages are made at the inſtigation of the Devil; who heating the Blood of the Marrying Perſons, provokes them to the Sin of Luxury, in which the Yoke-fellows encourage one another, ſo as they perpetrate together innumerable Sins, and that of all ſorts: For if a Husband or Wife falls into the Sin of Ambition, or that of the Fleſh, they will engage their Companions to commit the ſame Faults to an extremity, and will not give over until the Luxurious Party is ſatiated and ſurfeited in his Sin. I have known ſome, that appear'd to be good People, who have at laſt been brought to Steal and Lye, and deal unjuſtly, that they might ſatisfy their Yoke-fellows; and had rather be Damn'd ſo they might pleaſe them, than ſave their Souls by reſiſting them, or oppoſing the Evil. It is a very lamentable thing that one ſhould pawn his Salvation, that he may pleaſe his Yoke-fellow by Sin. I am not reſolved to follow theſe Examples, nor to damn my Soul for the ſatisfaction or pleaſure of Men. I think it better to offend Father, Mother, Siſter, Brother, Wife, or Husband, than to offend God, or do any thing contrary to the perfection of my Soul. Let Men make what Judgment they pleaſe of my Actions, they can not ſave me; and my buſineſs is not to ſatisfy them, ſeeing I cannot pleaſe Men, but I muſt diſpleaſe God. I will deſpiſe all their wrong judgments, and ſet my ſelf to accompliſh the Will of God. And no Perſon needs come to live with me, if they are not abſolutely determined to deny themſelves

ſelves and become true Chriſtians; ſince otherwiſe I will turn them away as unworthy of the Houſe of God; this I will do without fear or regard of any Perſon, ſeeing it is the Will of God. I want no advice or counſel from Men, when God alone is my Counſellour, my Maſter, and my Guide in the Building of his New Church, and will himſelf build and govern it, after his Holy Will and Pleaſure. They that do not approve of his Government, and cannot ſubmit to his Evangelical Law, ought not to attempt to be with me, if they would not have the trouble of returning: For though I did receive them, yet I could not keep them; the Orders that God has given me being ſuch, as I muſt not keep any but thoſe that do effectually embrace an Evangelical Life. 'Tis for this reaſon I have turn'd away ſome that have been with me many Years, becauſe it was not till after ſo many Years converſe, that I diſcovered their Hypocriſie, and knew that the Devil was their Maſter. And I am not oblig'd to give every Body a reaſon of what I do by the Will of God. It ſhould be enough for them to know that God is my Director, and will never inſpire me with any Evil: If they bended their Minds to this belief, it would give them ſatisfaction in all. But ſuch as do not believe that God directs me, do well not to come near me; much leſs ought they to ſubmit to a blind credulity. They ſhould pray to God, that he would give them this Light of Truth, by which they might be able to diſtinguiſh betwixt Truth and Falſhood, there being now ſo many Deceits in the Conduct of Spiritual Perſons, as one cannot tell where to go to find the Truth.

VIII.

Falſe Reſtorers of the Evangelical Life.

§. 106. MANY do falſly pretend to have the Truth, and do thus ſeduce many. Now is the Age of thoſe falſe Prophets foretold by Jeſus Chriſt: They riſe up in ſeveral Places, and work Signs and Wonders. They write to me from *Germany* that there is there a *Capuchin* who raiſes the Dead; reſtores Sight to the Blind; makes the Lame to Walk; and does other ſuch Wonderful Works, which can proceed only from the Devil; there being now no neceſſity for ſeeing ſuch Signs and Wonders, the Chriſtian Faith being ſufficiently prov'd, and own'd by Chriſtians. In the Days of Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles, the ignorant People wanted

ſuch

ſuch Miracles: For they believ'd thoſe Holy Perſons deſign'd to deſtroy the Law of God, and could not get rid of this Opinion (which they thought there was good ground for) without ſeeing Extraordinary Signs and Wonders wrought by thoſe new Evangeliſts, to bring their new Doctrine to be believed by the People. But we have no need of Prophets now, being we are in the laſt times, when all the Prophecies ſhall be accompliſhed; much leſs do we want external Miracles, ſeeing God does not intend the Promulgation of any new Law, and has by his Friends confirmed and eſtabliſhed the Evangelical Law, that was taught by Jeſus Chriſt, his Apoſtles and Diſciples; many of whom confirm'd the Faith by their Blood. And Chriſt himſelf, the laſt of all the Prophets, has confirm'd his Evangelical Law by a Cruel Death, ſhedding his Blood upon the Croſs, even to the very laſt drop; ſo as the Chriſtian Faith has been ſufficiently confirm'd in the time of the Primitive Church: And there wants not now any new Prophets or Propheteſſes to confirm the Goſpel, that is ſufficiently eſtabliſhed throughout the Chriſtian World. There wants nothing now, but that Chriſtians ſhould put it in practice; and to induce Men to this Practice, there's no need to ſee the Dead riſe; the Blind recover their Sight; and the Lame Walk: Thoſe falſe Prophets and Wonder-Workers, would more effectually promote the Salvation of Souls, if they would themſelves embrace an Evangelical Life. The practice of this would be more powerful through their good Example to convert Souls, than all their Prophecies or Miracles; which ſerve only to amuſe the Minds of other Men, and to encreaſe the Pride of thoſe that would thus paſs for Prophets: For my own part, I make no account of thoſe that call themſelves Prophets, or work Miracles in our Days. I rather look upon them to be in compact with the Devil, inaſmuch as I find them ſeeking their own Glory, their Eaſe, their Pleaſures, and taking two Wives inſtead of one, that they may glut their Luxurious Paſſions. Fine marks of Prophets! To ſee them ſtill cleaving to Fleſh and Blood, ſetting their Hearts on dainty Bits, and delicate Wines; and after they have ſpent their own Eſtate in ſuch Luxurious Living, then ſeek to proſelyte Rich Perſons to their Opinions, that they may have ſtill wherewithal to ſatiate themſelves in their Senſualities.

§. 107. And theſe Prophets and Propheteſſes would very willingly reckon me among themſelves, probably becauſe they have heard that I have the conveniency of Worldly Riches, which they would chearfully conſume under colour of Vertue

and

and Piety; pretending, that God has created all the fineſt and beſt Things for his Friends, of which they look upon themſelves to be the moſt conſiderable. For this Reaſon they wear the fineſt Cloath, and eat the beſt Meat, as meriting all, becauſe of their Virtue, which conſiſts only of fine Words and Speculations, beautifying their Diſcourſes with high Names of God, which they make uſe of alſo in their pretended Charms againſt Arms; they bear about thoſe high Words and Names of God, to ſecure their Lives againſt Fire and Sword. Such are the Practices of the Prophets in our Days alſo; we hear them often repeat *Jehovah Jeſus Tzebaoth*, which makes me afraid to hear ſuch holy Names in profane Mouths, and the rather, that God has commanded *not to take his holy Name in vain*. But theſe Perſons pay more Deference to their own fooliſh Imaginations, than to the Commandments of God, and would rather be commanding than obeying the Holy Spirit. They are ſo abandon'd to their depraved Senſe, as they do not any longer diſcern or deſire the Truth. Their great deſign is to perſwade Men, that they have the Gift of Prophecy, that together with their Hearts, they may have their Purſes alſo. But it ſeems God will not now ſuffer their Deluſions to prevail any longer, ſeeing the Chief of theſe Prophets does now declare, that all his Propheſies and Predictions were Diabolical Deceits: And though he himſelf had not declared it, I had Knowledge of it from God from the Time that he began to call himſelf a Prophet and Reſtorer of *Iſrael*; and I wrote to ſome of my Friends, who deſired to know my Thoughts of him, that he was an Impoſtor for giving out, that he was a Prophet when he was not, and that all his Boaſtings proceeded from the Pride of his Heart. This God reveal'd to me more than Seven Years ago, as may be ſeen by the Date of my Letters upon that Subject; though at that Time many good People, and ſome of my own Friends, look'd upon this *Rothe* as a Prophet from God, yea, a King eſtabliſh'd over *Iſrael*: So as many took Umbrage at my Words, as if I had had an Ambition to be thought the only Perſon ſent from God to declare his Wonders, and were vex'd that any other than my ſelf ſhould ſpeak in God's Name. But theſe Friends are ſince that time undeceived, upon ſeeing the poor Succeſs that this Prophet had, whom the Magiſtrates of *Amſterdam* and his own Relations have condemn'd to the *Work-Houſe* during the reſt of his Life, together with his Golden Crown and Standard, and the reſt of his Accoutrements, that he had provided for deſtroying

ſtroying all the Kings of the Earth. I look when his Prophet *Kuhlman* will have a like Succeſs; ſeeing he is guided by the ſame Spirit. They are Prophets, that to indulge their Eaſe do beg their Bread, and yet are diſappointed. This *Kuhlman* calls himſelf, *The new Spirit of* Jacob Boheme, though he has nothing of his Spirit. He ſteals indeed ſome Words or Terms out of *Jacob Boheme*'s Writings, as any Body may do reading or copying out of the Works of the ſaid *Boheme*, as a certain Woman, named *Tanneke Denys* has done alſo: She has made uſe of this *Boheme*'s Terms, tho' neither the one nor other has any thing of that which was peculiar to *Jacob Boheme*'s Spirit, even in Nature it ſelf. They do diſhonour him, by ſtriving to adorn themſelves with the natural Lights that God hath beſtow'd on him, playing the Ape to imitate him. And I ſee by a Letter that this *Kuhlman* writes me lately, that they would be pleaſed to be of my Society, that they might give ſome Colour to their Deluſions from the Divine Lights that God gives me: Which God will not allow, ſeeing he has all along made me diſcern the falſe Prophets from the true: For as ſoon as I heard of *Sabatai Sebi*, who gave himſelf out for a Prophet among the *Jews*, I ſaid, that he was a Diabolical Prophet, and many blamed me as guilty of raſh Judging; but the contrary appear'd in the Sequel of that Impoſtor's Story, who became a *Turk* for the Love of Money. I diſcover'd *Rothe* likewiſe from the firſt time I ſpoke with him in *Amſterdam* in the Year 1669, when he told me of his ſeeing Angels, and that they were wont to awake him in the Night, yea, and pull him out of the Bed, and draw him towards the Table, and opening the Bible, would ſay to him, *Write this*; which frighted me, and made me tell him, *Truly, Sir, I am not acquainted with theſe Ways, nor do I at all ſee Angels; were I to ſee an Angel in Human Likeneſs, as you ſay you ſee them, I ſhould think it were a Devil.* Then *Rothe* replied, You are not yet come to ſuch Perfection as to ſee Angels, but I ſee them ordinarily, and every Day. This made me afraid to converſe with him, and always ſtrive to avoid him, though he came to ſee me from time to time againſt my Inclination, and wrote me Letters, which I never anſwer'd: On they contrary, I made ſome of his Friends let him know, that he ſhould not trouble himſelf to write to me; that I would be ſo far from reading his Letters, that I would throw them in the Fire, and ſome of them I have yet by me ſhut and ſeal'd as they came, not thinking them worth my Reading. I have alſo had Experience of *Tanneke Denys* the Propheteſs, who is ſaid to have con-

tinued

tinued in Extaſies and Raptures of the Spirit for a whole Day. She has written ſome Books almoſt in Imitation of *Jacob Boheme*'s Stile, as *Kuhlman* has done, being both led by one Spirit, and aiming at the ſame End; that is, to get Money wherewith to live deliciouſly, and make good Cheer, as her Maid has told me, that no Perſon was nicer, nor harder to be pleaſed in Sawces than was this Propheteſs. She muſt needs make them herſelf, or otherwiſe ſhe would not eat them, ſo nice was ſhe in her Palate, and ſo careful to have every thing done according to the Senſuality of corrupt Nature. Theſe are no Marks of Holineſs, but of a Perſon altogether carnal, who has choſen her Paradiſe in this World, and cannot pretend to any in the other. I have ſpoken with her Father and Mother, and Siſter and Brother, and her Huſband alſo, when I was at *Amſterdam*; but ſhe herſelf never came to ſee me; and when I ask'd an intimate Friend of hers, why ſhe was ſo reſerved? I was told, that *Tanneke Denys* dared not to come before my Eyes, becauſe ſhe was inform'd, that I underſtood the inward State of Souls. This was a Surprize to me, and made me ſay, that ſhe muſt have ſomething very bad conceal'd and hidden within her, that ſhe was afraid ſhould be diſcovered: Which was no good Sign; and for my own part, I ſhould be very glad to hear of any Perſon that could diſcern the inward State of the Heart, to the end that Perſon might diſcover unto me if there were any ſecret Evil lurking in my Heart, which I my ſelf was not conſcious of, there being (c) *nothing more deceitful than the Heart of Man.* But theſe Perſons, knowing there is no Good in their Interior, are afraid leſt others come to know it. Poor Prophets! that take ſuch Pains to conceal from Men that which God knows, and will make manifeſt in his time. It is in vain for thoſe falſe Prophets and Propheteſſes to think to conceal themſelves from thoſe to whom God will make them manifeſt. I do not know the Interior of all Men, but God knows them, and reveals to me all that he judges expedient for me to know; and inaſmuch as theſe falſe Prophets and Propheteſſes were asking to be join'd with me, it was expedient for me to know what Spirit they were led by; and accordingly I was aſſured from God, that they were led by the Spirit of the Devil, with whom I will never have any Buſineſs nor Communication. And therefore this *Kuhlman* needs not give himſelf the Trouble of ſeeing me, or writing to me, to get me to unite with the Devil's Aſſociates; for he will

(c) *Jer.* xvii. 9.

only

only loſe his Labour. He ſeems to be but ill appointed in this Matter; for upon the firſt Letter that I received from him, I caus'd to tell him, that he ſhould not write to me any more; that I would not entertain any Correſpondence with him; and that I would ſend back his Letters without opening them. This he was told from me, when he was with *Tanneke Denys* at *Lubeck*. Wherefore I am aſtoniſh'd that he will yet be writing, and has printed his Letter before he addreſs'd it to me, and that he will think of entring into ſo unſuitable a Friendſhip, as to join one that has the Spirit of God with Perſons that are led by the Spirit of the Devil. A thing that is impracticable, God and the Devil being incompatible Things, that cannot dwell together. And therefore *Kuhlman* labours in vain to effect Impoſſibilities. I imagine he does it through Ignorance, thinking that I am led by a Spirit like his, which proceeds only from the Stars and Principles of Nature, which is uncertain and changeable as the Wind: And whereas *Kuhlman* ſays in his Letter, that I know not the Principles that *Jacob Boheme* ſpeaks of; I am reſolved not to know them, ſeeing God is my firſt, my ſecond and my third Principle, all in one; ſo that I deſire not to learn any other, though I could do it in a Moment. I leave all thoſe curious Studies for *Kuhlman*, that he may ſee whether theſe Speculations will ſave him at his Death. For my part, I know from Chriſt's Mouth, that (d) *there is but one thing neceſſary*; and that I cannot be deceived if I rely upon it. Let Men paſs what Judgment they pleaſe on it, there is nothing can give me Aſſurance of my Salvation, but the *Evangelical Law*. I can never be diſappointed in obſerving this, ſeeing God never deceives us. He gives me Grace to know and practiſe it. I am little concern'd whether wiſe Men or falſe Prophets come to tell me, *That I have no Knowledge of* Jacob Boheme's *Three Principles*. I am content to be ignorant of what they know in this Doctrine, ſaying with the Apoſtle, *I know nothing but Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified. If any Perſon will teach me otherwiſe, he is a Deceiver*: I am reſolved not to give ear to him. But I would willingly ſee all theſe Prophets and Propheteſſes brought to the Touch-ſtone of the Evangelical Law, to examine their Lives by this Goſpel. I am afraid they would all be found to have much baſe Alloy. Wherefore *Kuhlman*, and all that adhere to him, would do well to keep away from me, and not come near my Touch-ſtone, which ſo readily diſtinguiſhes the true

(d) *Luke* x. 42.

Gold

Gold of Charity from the falſe, be it never ſo ſpecious in Appearance. There be many already that have found themſelves deceived when brought to this Proof, who thinking to paſs for pure Gold, have, to their great Shame, been manifeſted to be falſe, as they truly were. Wherefore I do admoniſh all the Children of God to beware of theſe falſe Prophets, and to lay the Foundation of their Vertues in the *Renewing of the Goſpel-Spirit*, and not in fine Diſcourſes, Propheſies, or ſeeming Virtues, which blind even the Eyes of thoſe that ſee clearly. We are to rely upon Jeſus Chriſt's Doctrine alone; ſeeing in all other Doctrines there is Deceit, ſuch as wherewith theſe falſe Prophets would (*f*) *deceive the Elect themſelves, if it were poſſible*: For they put on Sanctity, and cover themſelves with Veils of Hypocriſie.

§. 108. This is Satan's laſt Deceit wherewith he beguiles Men. The greater Numbers of Men he had already engaged by black Malice, ſo as they follow'd him in Wickedneſſes, Treacheries, Robb'ries, Frauds, Lyes, and other ſcandalous Tranſgreſſions. But yet after all there remain'd ſtill here and there in the World ſeveral well-meaning Perſons, whom the Devil was not able to induce to down-right Wickedneſs, they being reſolved to keep themſelves from groſs material Sins. The Devil had found it was in vain to think to perſwade ſuch Perſons to do Evil, contrary to their good Reſolutions; and therefore it is that he eſſays now to ſeduce good People, under colour of Virtue and Holineſs, making his Adherents counterfeit Saints, Prophets, yea, ſpecial Ambaſſadors from God; and if he knows of any Perſon that has the Fear of God, or deſires to be a true Chriſtian, he will endeavour to have this Perſon married to one of his Pactioners, that he may have this well-meaning Perſon for his own, at leaſt indirectly by the Procurement of his covenanted Servant, who being true to his Maſter's Intereſt, will ſeduce his Yoke-fellow to ſin, and make her a Pactioner, as himſelf is, or at leaſt Partaker in his Sins. And by this means the Devil gains all to himſelf Good and Bad, ſome by voluntary Paction, and others by condeſcending to the Evil of their Yoke-fellows; and beſides all this he eſtabliſhes his Empire by ſuch Marriages; ſeeing all the Children of ſuch Marriages are by the wicked Party dedicated to the Devil, though the good Party knows nothing of the Matter. And it is a hard matter to relieve Children from Satan's Bondage, that have been thus made

(*f*) *Matth.* xxiv. 24.

over

over to him before they were born. He engages their young Hearts with the Baits of Senſualities, the pleaſant Reliſhes of the Taſte, or other Pleaſures of the Five natural Senſes; ſo as by the Help of theſe Habits, he makes them unwilling, after they are come to the Uſe of Reaſon, to part with theſe Senſualities, and willing to bind themſelves over unto the Devil, and to be for ever united to him. Thus is the Number of Sorcerers daily encreaſing: For the good Party being dead, the Wicked and their Children continue in the World, and ſtock it with Children of their own Stamp and Character. And thus is this perverſe Generation continually encreaſing to the End of the World. This is what the Children of God ought well to conſider, and not raſhly to engage themſelves in the married State, wherein there is ſo great Danger of being matched with one that is in Compact with the Devil; ſeeing the Numbers of ſuch are now ſo multiply'd, and it is ſo hard a matter to diſcover them, they having commonly more Appearance of Vertue and Piety, than good and ſincere Perſons, who are without Hypocriſie, and make Shew of no more Vertue but what they really have. I am perſwaded this is the Reaſon why Jeſus Chriſt in his Goſpel ſays, ſpeaking of the laſt Days, (g) *That it ſhall be as it was in the Days of* Noah, *they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in Marriage, until they were all drown'd in the Deluge of Waters*; giving us hereby to underſtand, that the Wrath of God was then upon the whole World in general, becauſe Men having forgotten their Obligation to love God, had ſet all their Affection and Heart upon Eating, and Drinking, and Marrying; and this they would not refrain, till they were all taken away by the Flood.

§. 109. This was the true Figure of Mens Way of Living now, whole Affections are entirely ſet upon eating ſavory Meat, drinking delicate Wine, marrying, and giving in Marriage: For we ſee, that it is not the Worldlings only that go on in this Way, but the moſt Spiritual alſo, even thoſe who call themſelves God's Ambaſſadors for re-eſtabliſhing *Iſrael*; they allure People out of the World, to make them live a more licentious Life with them, than they did when they were yet in the World, giving themſelves up to good Eating, and Drinking, and Marriage; for theſe Three Things are become now the World's Gods; as if Men were made for no other End but Eating, and Drinking, and Marriage, ſeeing

(g) *Matth.* xxiv. 37.

theſe

these are the only Aim of all their Care, and Concern, and Labour. Where are there now any to be met with, who seek only the Kingdom of Heaven, and wait for other Things, as God shall please to bestow them? Men are much more anxious for these other things, than for the Kingdom of Heaven, which is the least of their Cares; and provided they can have these other Things in abundance, they will easily retire from the World, especially when Fortune frowns upon them, so as they connot live so plentifully as they desired.

§. 110. This is the Reason why the *Labadists* have such a number of Followers, because they see that their Tables are furnish'd with Plenty of the best Meats and Drinks, and thus Nature may have her sensual Divertisements, as all that are of their Congregation take them; they divert themselves, and caress one another, and marry, when it is the Will of their Preachers, who are the Persons truly pointed at in St. *Matthew*, (h) *That eat and drink, and marry and give in Marriage*: For no other Persons give in Marriage as they do; tho' they marry, yet have not they themselves the Power of giving another in Marriage. But these new Sectaries assume to themselves Power and Authority of pairing their Proselytes at their Pleasure, as Men match and sort Pigeons; and when the Party pleases them, and is any Advantage for their Assembly, they espouse her themselves into their own Family; so as one that would be married, and eat well, and live a gay and easie Life, needs only retire to the *Labadists*, where one may have a Life compleatly easie, according to the Corruption of Nature; and withal they are perswaded they shall enter into Paradise when they die. But in this these false Prophets are deceived, seeing none shall enjoy Paradise, but only they that deny themselves, according to what Jesus Christ has affirm'd saying, that (i) *Those that do not deny themselves cannot be my Disciples*. These Sectaries must be Lyars, if Jesus Christ says true, seeing he rejects all that will not deny themselves, and take up their Cross to follow him; Whereas these Sectaries promise Salvation unto those who do directly contrary, who will neither suffer any thing, nor be Followers of Jesus Christ. And as they have a separate Church in this World, they must also form a separate Paradise in the next, seeing that which God has promised is not to be attain'd to by the Ways and Doctrines which these *Labadists* recommend. This is the broad Way that they have

(h) *Matth.* xxiv. 37. (i) *Luke* ix. 23.

choſen in ſatisfying corrupt Nature, which God aſſures me leads to Perdition; and this ſame God directs me to a narrow Way, that leadeth unto Life, which is that (k) *of denying one's ſelf, and of bearing the Croſs to follow Jeſus Chriſt*; yea (l) *of making themſelves Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven*; of repenting, that he may not periſh, ſeeing Jeſus Chriſt ſays, (m) *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all periſh.* He does not ſo much as except theſe *Labadiſts*, nor all thoſe that ſay they are too frail to do Penitence, being willing that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould have done this for them; but he has ſaid this to all ſorts of Perſons in general, and to every one in particular, as the Word *All* comprehends.

And becauſe theſe *Labadiſts* are unwilling to practiſe this Penitence, they are offended that I ſhould recommend it in my Writings, which they condemn and undervalue as much as poſſible, prohibiting thoſe of their own Party to read them. One of them had retired to *Geneva*, and carried ſome of my Books along with him, for which they wrote unto him, that he had offended God, and was bound to do Penance for making my Writings known at *Geneva*, where they had not formerly been known. Was not this a great Crime to do Penance for, the being the Occaſion that the Truth of God is made known to Perſons that did not know it? We may well ſay, that the Minds of theſe *Labadiſts* muſt be very uneaſie, and haraſs'd with Fears, ſeeing they are ſo much troubled that my Writings ſhould be known at *Geneva*. Whereas I wou'd be under no Concern, though I heard their Writings were publiſh'd all over the World, altho' I do believe they contain a damnable and pernicious Doctrine of *Predeſtination*. I leave all Men at Liberty to read and believe what they will, knowing that God has created all Men free: And Men ought not to conſtrain one another, as thoſe *Labadiſts* do, who have already made many Sermons to diſparage my Writings and Perſon; having alſo publiſh'd a Book againſt me, which I have not been at the Pains to anſwer, ſeeing all they alledge deſerves not ſo much; and all that read my Writings will ſee, that theſe Sectaries ſpeak only from Paſſion, and inſiſt upon Punctilio's of Scholaſtical Words, which ſignifie nothing to ſolid Vertue, or a truly Chriſtian Life, at which all my Writings aim, by drawing Men unto God; whereas theſe *Labadiſts* endeavour to bring Men over to themſelves. I have ſeen them compaſs Sea and Land

(k) *Matth.* xvi. 24. (l) *Ibid.* xix. 12. (m) *Luke* xiii. 3, 5.

to make one little *Labadist*, and when they have made him such, they have render'd him more a Child of Wrath than he was before. They have also much endeavour'd to have me of their Band, and to come with me into *North-strand*, offering me Tunns of Gold to assist me, if I design'd to purchase that whole Island, that they might establish themselves there. But I was not to be catch'd with fine Words and pious Pretences; seeing from my first Knowledge of them, God made me see that all was but Cheat, and Search of Human Accommodations. Wherefore I was never since willing to have any Dealing with them, writing only once to *Labadie*, and never more; because I saw well enough that the Spirit which guided me was altogether different from that which guided these *Labadists*; and that we would not accord together, no more than he accorded with the Members of the Ecclesiastical Synods, with whom he had continual Quarrels and Contentions; and when he was sent for to the Assembly of these Pastors for the last time, he told me, *He would then Nonplus them all*; which I was displeased with, telling him, That Jesus Christ did not send his Apostles to dispute. He replied, *That it was the Will of God, and that he taking him by the Hand, said to him, My Friend, go up higher*; which I could not tell what to say to, and therefore let him depart without any Answer. But he was no sooner arrived at that Synod, than he was deposed from his Cure, and turn'd out, and prohibited to preach any more. Which was an Issue very contrary to his Prediction; for instead of rising higher, he was brought very low, not knowing where to retire in Safety. This is the End of such false Prophesies, which was visible also in *Rothe*, *Tanneke Denys*, and others, who called themselves Prophets, when they were not truly such.

Did these false Prophets hurt only their own Consciences, the Matter was not so great; but when they keep others from receiving the Truth of God, they do great Prejudice to the Souls of others, who by reading the Truths of God, might probably be converted to him; for it is through the Ignorance of these that many perish. Wherefore it appears to me, that these *Labadists* are much to be blamed to wrest out of the Peoples Hands these so wholsome Writings, which they themselves did in the Beginning so much esteem and relish. They must needs be very inconstant, to praise the same thing at one time, and despise it at another, when the Thing it self is no wise changed. This proceeds only from their irregular or malicious Passions: For it is to believed, if I had

rank'd my ſelf in their Sect, as they deſired, both my Doctrine and my Perſon had continued good; but foraſmuch as I refus'd to be of their Faction, they declar'd their Enmity, Bluſtering and Writing againſt me, which I am not in the leaſt afraid of, knowing that all that they are able to ſay, ſhall not diminiſh ought of my Love to my God. Only 'tis pity that theſe Perſons Wound their Souls, by Buſie-meddling in other Peoples Buſineſs. Which the Apoſtle highly condemns, ranking this Sin of, (*n*) *Medling in other Mens matters*, with Sorcery and other Enormous Guiltineſs. Were it not more adviſeable for theſe Labadiſts not to meddle in my affairs no more than I do in theirs? I ſuffer them to go to and again, Speak and Write as they pleaſe, without ſaying one Word to them. I am told they Write both Private and Publick Letters againſt me, and make long Sermons to diſprove me and my Doctrine: Whereas if they ſaid nothing of that matter, thoſe that know me and Read my Writings, are as capable as the Labadiſt Miniſters, to Diſtinguiſh the Good from the Evil, if there were any to be found in them. For my part, I leave my Friends and Diſciples all at Liberty to read what they pleaſe, not Prohibiting them any Writings; becauſe I am not in the leaſt jealouſe that they will forſake the Truth that I Teach, which has no other Foundation but the Goſpel; whereas the Doctrine of theſe new Sectaries is founded only upon the Opinions of ſome Men that have not been led by the Spirit of God: And therefore 'tis no Wonder if they are afraid leaſt ſome of their Diſciples deſert them upon reading more ſolid Truths, which I doubt not will be ſeen, there being ſome good and ſenſible Perſons in their Community, capable to Comprehend the Truth of God, if they had an Opportunity. This is the reaſon, why they do ſo ſtraitly charge not to read my Writings; 'tis a Piece of Policy, forthey are afraid their new Church would be overturn'd, as being Built only with Mens Hands.

But they need not think to Support it, when God reſolves to Deſtroy it, as he will do every other that is Built on the Sand, which the leaſt Storm will overthrow: for Men have nothing to do to Build Churches in their own Faſhion. God alone ought to be the Eſtabliſher of the true Church, and none other. It ſhould be enough for us, that Jeſus Chriſt has Eſtabliſh'd the true Chriſtian Church, and we ought not to divide into ſo many different Sentiments, which create Schiſms and Diſpures, every one being willing to hold to his own Opinion as the beſt; tho' they are all no more but Opinions

(*n*) 1 *Pet.* iv. 15.

ſpringing

ſpringing from the Corrupt Minds of Carnal Men; upon which no Man ought to lay the ſtreſs of his Salvation; ſeeing there is but one God, one Faith, and one True Church, which is that which Jeſus Chriſt has built upon the Earth. This is the alone True Church wherein we can be Saved. All other Religions, call them by what Names they pleaſe, can none of them ſave us. It is not enough to be Romaniſt, or Calviniſt, or Lutheran, or Mennoniſt, Arminian, Quaker, Labadiſt, or of any other Sect or Religion; all this will do nothing toward our Salvation. We muſt be *Chriſtians*, or Periſh everlaſtingly. This is what all theſe Sects are not ſufficiently aware of, every one of them thinking, that all thoſe that follow them ſhall be Saved. This is a great Deluſion and Amuſement of Spirit whereby many Periſh, as to which the Scripture ſays, (o) *Wo to him that puts his Truſt in Man*; ſeeing one of them cannot Save another: Every one of them muſt give up their own accompts, and ſtand alone in the Judgment of God; and no Sect or Religion can plead for us. And if Jeſus Chriſt ſaid to his Friends and Neighbours, (p) *I know you not*; how much rather will he ſay this to thoſe new Sectaries, who are not Chriſtians, but Anti-Chriſtians, ſeeking their own Glory, deſiring many Followers, and to be Served and Honour'd; whereas Jeſus Chriſt was rejected of Men, and ſuffered with Humility their injuries.

But theſe new Sectaries are allarm'd at the leaſt Word of Contradiction; and all the grudge they bear to me, is occaſion'd by my being unwilling to Joyn with them; for they have no other Ground or Reaſon for their Enmity, as is plainly to be ſeen in the Book they have Written againſt me, where they have ſpent a Flood of Words to diſcover ſomething in my Writings that does not make to their purpoſe; which forthwith they Brand with *Hereſie* and *Blaſphemy againſt God*; Charges that are more applicable to themſelves than me. What greater Blaſphemy againſt God, than to ſay, that when all Men were fallen into the ſame Sin, and lying under the ſame Condemnation, God did ſave ſome of this Damn'd Human Race, and leave others to Periſh? This would be a Partiality in God, accompanied with Injuſtice, which cannot be found in him; and yet thoſe Students endeavor to make theſe things paſs for Truths by their Gloſſes and Diſcourſes, tho' before God they are Notorious Untruths. This is what Mr. *Poiret* was very willing to make out in refuting *Labadie's* Book againſt me, but I did not think it expedient,

(o) *Jer.* xvii. 5. (p) *Matth.* xxv. 12. tho'

tho' the ſaid Mr. *Poiret* is much abler to manage a Scholaſtick argument than the Labadiſts, ſo that he could refute and run them down from the Principles of Truth. He could ſoon have Detected all their Lies and far fetch'd Arguments, which Aim only to Surprize me in my Words. Their whole Buſineſs has been to Cavil at my Writings, which they have Worſted and Perverted from the Authors meaning, having no mind to Underſtand my ſenſe, fearing leaſt thus they could not have any Ground to contradict me in any thing, as is Evident unto all that Peruſe that Treatiſe, that they have Written againſt me, and compare it with thoſe paſſages that they quote out of my Writings; they will find that this *Labadie* has left out all that goes before, and that follows the Words which he cites, on purpoſe that the true ſenſe of them not being underſtood, he might have room to Criticize upon Words that are not ſpoken in the Schollaſtick manner.

Ye ſee how little theſe Perſons are concern'd for the ſaving Truth, ſtudying an Elegant Stile more than an unfeign'd Practice of Vertue! ſeeing they make no Conſcience of diſparaging many things which themſelves own to be good in my Writings, and which do truly aim at drawing Souls unto God, only for ſome unpoliſh'd Words, and Unſcholaſtick Pronunciations. A thing that I will not be at pains to Study, ſeeing I am not Ambitious of the Glory of Eloquence, but of that of teaching, in any Terms, the Truth which God Communicates unto me. I know many would be well pleas'd with a clear diſcovery of theſe Labadiſts infidelity in their Quotations from my Writings, but I am no Lover of Diſputes, knowing that Jeſus Chriſt would not allow them among his Apoſtles and Diſciples: for when ſome of them went back from him, he did not appoint thoſe that remain'd with him, to go and Diſpute with thoſe others, but only demanded of them (q) *If they alſo would forſake him?* Nor did he ſend his Diſciples to the Univerſities to Learn how to ſpeak well according to the Laws of Eloquence, but did rather Train them up in an Evangelical Simplicity, teaching Chriſtians that their Words ſhould be, *Yea, Yea,* and *Nay, Nay*; telling them, that *whatſoever goes beyond this is Evil.* But theſe new Sectaries ground their Religion upon very unneceſſary diſputes; for what ſignifies it to a Man's Salvation to know whether God has ordain'd him to Salvation or Damnation, except it be

(q) *Joh.* vi. 67.

upon

upon beliveing himſelf reprobated, to make him deſpair, and giving himſelf unto all manner of Sin, having no further regard to the ſaving of his Soul, which he imagines cannot (by reaſon of Gods Predeſtination) be affected by all the good that he can do? This Belief opens the Door to every Abomination; for he who believes he is Reprobated, does without fear give himſelf up to Work all Sorts of Wickedneſs that are not Puniſhable among Men, whoſe fear alone is what can now reſtrain him. And he who thinks himſelf predeſtinated to Salvation, will alſo give himſelf full Liberty to follow the Motions of his corrupt Nature, in the belief, that do what he pleaſes, he cannot be Damned. Is not this a Dangerous Doctrine both for the Good and Bad? And yet upon this are the Labadiſts founded; in Conſequence whereof they Live as they liſt, taking their Diverſions and ſenſual Pleaſures, under Colour of being the Elect; and among them both Sexes are permitted to have Intimate Familiarities and Privacies together, not accounting this to be Sin but Chriſtian Friendſhip, as they find a way to perſwade the Young Females, whom they have Enveigled in their Snares. It is good for them, that I am not of their Congregation; for I could not have been able to bear ſuch impure Converſation without Reproving it; yea, Revealing it to them to whom it belonged to take Cognizance of it. For who that had common Modeſty, would bear with ſuch Bareſac'd Immodeſty? It has made me troubled to hear ſome of theſe things from one that was Herſelf Corrupted by one of theſe Labadiſts; tho' at the ſame time he had a Wife of his own, he made her believe that all theſe things were part of the Chriſtian Liberty, and that this was no Sin among the Children of God. Whence it evidently appears that this new Church is not deſign'd to bring Souls unto God, but rather to Enſlave them to the Devil. Wherefore, my Children, ſuffer not your ſelves to be impos'd upon by Specious Appearances of Virtue and Piety; for they are the moſt Dangerous, who make the greateſt Pretences this way. Flee, flee from all theſe Sects, and from thoſe who call themſelves Saints or Prophets, for fear you be deceiv'd by them, as too many are by theſe Hypocrites, who have nothing of Solidity in them, but are wholly exteriour, that they may impoſe upon others. And when you are told of any Holy Perſon, bring him to the Touch-ſtone of the *Evangelical Life*, by which you'll diſcover, if his Charity is true Gold. But if you find, that he is not endued with Chriſt's Lowlineſs, Charity and Love, believe him not, tho' he ſhould ſpeak with the Tongue of Angels.

Remember always, what are the Qualifications of true (r) *Charity*, that it *ſuffereth Long, and is kind, and thinketh no Evil*, and the reſt which the Apoſtle Deſcribes; aſſuring us that without true Charity, none can be Saved: *Tho'*, ſays he, (s) *One did give all his Goods to Feed the Poor, yea, his Body to be Burn'd; tho' he remov'd Mountains, had the Gift of Propheſie and Miracles; tho' he had all theſe Virtues and many more, they are all nothing without Charity.* This is an infallible Truth which Chriſtians are not ſufficiently aware of: They think they have Charity, when it is only a Self-love; it is of ſuch Chriſtians that the Scripture ſays, (t) *They have Eyes and ſee not, they have Ears and hear not.* For how many Chriſtians are there that See and Read this Goſpel, and yet know not what true Charity is, that it is the Love of God? Thoſe who give ſomething out of their Abundance to the Poor, think they have Charity; and thoſe who go to the Stake, for ſome Opinions in Religion, think they have Charity, and that they Die for God's Glory, tho' in effect they be only Martyrs to the Devil: as I aſſerted one Day to *Labadie*, who knocking his Hands againſt his Breaſt, ſaid unto me, *He was willing to Die in aſſerting this Predeſtination.* Upon which I related to him what had happen'd unto me in the Town of *Ghent*, where I had two Friends of contrary Sentiments, one held Predeſtination, and the other rejecting it maintain'd the contrary Opinion, tho' both agreed in this, that they were ready to Die for their Opinion: To whom I ſaid; *Gentlemen, ye would both Die Martyrs to the Devil, ſeeing there is no Foundation for any of your Opinions in the manner that ye conceive them:* And then looking upon *Labadie*, I ſaid, *And you alſo*, Sir, *ſhould Die a Martyr to the Devil, if you were put to Death for your Doctrine of Predeſtination*: Which put him in ſo great a rage, that he roſe up in fury, throwing down his Chair, and the Maſter of the Houſe with his Diſciples had enough to do to appeaſe him. Then I diſcover'd perfectly, that he had not Mortify'd his Irregular Paſſions, but was yet following the Motions of his corrupt Nature. This confirm'd me in the little eſteem I had conceiv'd of his Virtue, which conſiſted all of good Words, without a ſuitable Practice.

(r) 1. *Cor.* xiii. (s) *Ibid.* (t) *Matth.* xiii. 13.

IX.

IX.

Renovation altogether Spiritual.

§. 111. CHildren of God, let thoſe Examples be a warning to you. Turn no more a Deaf Ear to the Truths that I deliver unto you from God. God forbid it be of you that it is Written, (u) *They have Ears, and hear not*: For my Stile and Language is plain enough, and the ſenſe of my Doctrin is confirmed by the whole ſtrain of the Holy Scriptures. Conſider well what I have ſo frequently inculcated during the many Years that I have now known you. I have been always proteſting to you, *That ye cannot be Chriſtians unleſs ye Imitate Jeſus Chriſt, and that it is impoſſible to Imitate Jeſus Chriſt, unleſs ye deny your ſelves.* There needs no gloſſing nor diſputing after this, ſeeing all is contain'd in theſe two Points; That *ye cannot be Chriſtians without ye Imitate Jeſus Chriſt; and that ye cannot Imitate Jeſus Chriſt, without ye deny your ſelves.* Why will ye be going four ways, when there is but one way only that Leadeth unto Life? Ceaſe then from your own Opinions, and particular Churches and Religions, there's nothing of any Value before God, but an *Evangelical Life.* The Practice of this will make you both now and eternally Happy. But if ye decline from this ſtraight Way under any Pretence whatſoever, ye greatly endanger your Salvation, and your Error is the more irreparable that this is the End of the World.

§. 112. All other Doctrines and Opinions muſt ceaſe, (x) *The Wiſdom of the Wiſe muſt be deſtroyed, and the Underſtanding of the Prudent be brought to nought.* Now is the time wherein it ſhall be ſaid, (y) *Where is the Wiſe? Where is the Scribe?* God has long born with all this Magnificence of Churches, and Traficking about Souls, and will now overturn all theſe Eccleſiaſtical Traders Tables, as Jeſus Chriſt overturn'd the Tables and pour'd out the Money of thoſe that Bought and Sold in the Temple of *Jeruſalem*; and all thoſe ſhall be Scourg'd out of the Temple, who make Merchandice of Men, as the Prophet has foretold. *That Prieſts ſhall make Merchandice of Men*; by managing them to their own advantage. But this will now be ſoon at an End,

(u) *Matth.* xiii. 13. (x) *Iſai.* xxix 14. (y) *Iſai.* xxxiii. 19. 1 *Cor.* i. 20.

ſeeing

ſeeing theſe of our Days have fill'd up the Meaſure, and brought matters to ſuch a paſs, as God is not now any where Worſhipp'd, and ſerved in Spirit and in Truth: All the Worſhip that is now paid unto God, is no more but Parade and Hypocriſie. There is good reaſon for what God has threatned as to our Days by his Prophet, (z) *I will throw the Dung of your Sacrifices in your Faces.* For what can be more defiled and Corrupted with Sin than the Sacrifices that we now offer unto God? When Men go to Church, to Prayers, or Preaching, they do it with all the Pomp and Pride that may be, rather to ſee and be ſeen, than to Pray to God with a Contrite Penitent Heart. And if they hear a Sermon, they do it more to Obſerve the Preachers quaint expreſſions, than thoſe things that make to the Edification of Souls, which being none of the Preachers Aim, the Hearer reaps no Fruit of what he hears. And as for the Sacraments, they are frequented from Human Conſiderations, or for the reputation of being devout, ſo that all that which has the Name of God's ſervice, is done for the Glory of Men, and is nothing but Dung, which God Nauſeates and Rejects. He will have no more of theſe Parade-Solemnities, nor theſe Sacrifices that are Sullied with Sin; but requires a Contrite and Penitent Heart from us, and that with *David* we ſhould put Aſhes upon our Heads, and ſhed forth Floods of ſorrowful Tears from our Eyes.

§. 113. Now is the time that Men muſt begin a new Life, ſmiting upon the Breaſt with the Publican for paſt Sins, and for the time to come embracing a Goſpel Life; they muſt no longer conform themſelves to the World, but to the way that Chriſt has taught us, and wherein he himſelf walked firſt, that he might encourage us to follow him. But, Children of God, we muſt no longer think to amuſe God with Words as heretofore, in ſaying that we are Chriſtians, and that we deſire to pleaſe God: For all this is a Lye, when the Life and Practice does not correſpond with our Words. The Jews are blam'd that they cleave to the Letter of the Law, and neglect the Subſtance and Eſſence of it: For this they are blam'd in the Holy Scriptures, where it is ſaid, (a) *Thou that boaſteſt of the Law, through breaking the Law, diſhonoureſt thou God?* This may be much more ſaid of the Chriſtians now-a days, who while they make their boaſt of the Goſpel, do by their Works deſtroy the Subſtance and Eſſence of it. Every Man calls himſelf a Chriſtian, and profeſſes to believe the

(z) *Mal.* ii. 3. (a) *Rom.* ii. 23.

Goſpel

Goſpel, and yet none of them put in Practice what the Goſpel Law requires of them: And the Chriſtians of this Age would think it a diſhonour to embrace the Poverty of Jeſus Chriſt, which is in contempt among Chriſtians, who ſeek rather to be Rich and Great, than to be Poor and Deſpiſed. And as *Chriſt was* (b) *unto the Jews a ſtumbling Block, and unto the Gentiles Fooliſhneſs*; So is now his Spirit and Doctrine even among Chriſtians, who have retain'd nothing of Chriſt but the outſide, the Bark and the Letter: But for the Subſtance of the Law, it is wholly forgotten and annihilated among Chriſtians, who have made Laws to themſelves, and obſerve them more exactly than they do the Law of God.

§. 114. Wherefore he will deſtroy all thoſe Buildings made with Mens Hands, that one may be Built which ſhall not be made with Mens Hands, but by the Spirit of Life. And therefore they who deſire to ſerve in the Building of this Divine Temple, muſt not in any wiſe Live longer after the Fleſh, but muſt become Spiritual, yea, Divine; following in all things the motions of the Holy Spirit, and not thoſe of Corrupt Nature. If, Children of God, you deſire to rear up in your Soul a Chriſtian Life, you muſt firſt of all lay a ſolid Foundation of the Knowledge of your ſelves: For if you know not the Vices which are in your Souls, you can never withſtand them, nor deny your ſelves, as Jeſus Chriſt commands: For you will judge (as all other Men do) that you are not Evil, when you do nothing that is blame-worthy before Men, and when you lead a Civil and Honeſt, yea, a Vertuous Life, according to the World's Maxims. This makes many hope for Salvation, who ſay, that God is Good, and he will require no more of them. This is great Deceit and Preſumption to think of being ſaved without Good Works. This is one of the Sins againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which I believe many do commit through Ignorance; ſince, (c) *the whole Earth is over-ſpread with Darkneſs, and the People with Blindneſs*: and this is the reaſon why almoſt no Man knows himſelf, nor the original of his Malady. Ah! how can an unknown Malady be cured? A Wound muſt needs Feſter if it does not appear outwardly, or if ſome Inciſion is not made into it: It is even ſo as to our Souls, to which Sin has given a mortal Wound, which we do not diſcover nor ſearch unto the bottom. It muſt needs ſtill grow worſe and worſe, if with the Lancet of Penitence we do not open this hidden Impoſtume, which

(b) 1 *Cor.* i. 23. (c) *Iſai.* lx. 2.

no

no doubt will bring us to eternal Death, if it is not carefully looked to and healed. This is done by the denial of our ſelves, for that is the only Oyntment or Cataplaſm that can heal this Ulcer which Sin has brought into our Souls.

§. 115. For if Man had continued in the State wherein God Created him, he needed not to have deny'd himſelf: For then he had in himſelf an inclination to Good. This he might lawfully have followed without Sinning, provided he ſtill adhered to the Love of his God, for which he was Created; being permitted to enjoy at his Pleaſure all the Creatures, while he kept his Heart entire to Love his God. This was the only thing that God required of Man to make him Happy in time and throughout Eternity. Which has ſometimes made Holy Men ſay, *Love, and do what you will*: By which they underſtood, that he who Loves God can never do Evil. And this is true, even in this miſerable Life: For as Man before his Fall was permitted to follow the motions of his Nature, ſo now a regenerate Perſon is permitted to follow his Inclinations, which being dead to Sin, do live only unto Grace; and they are no longer his own motions or inclinations, but thoſe which God gives him, who lives no longer according to his own Corruption, but according to the motions of the Holy Spirit, who lives and operates in him by the conſent which the Soul gives him, to do all manner of Good, (d) *knowing that all Good comes from God, from whom no Evil can proceed.*

X.

From whence Evil comes in Man

§. 116. PErhaps ſome curious Perſons may ask, how then could *Adam* do Evil and fall into Sin, ſeeing before his fall he was naturally enclin'd to Good, till in effect miſcarried and became the Enemy of God? The reaſon of this was, that *Adam* having his Free-Will, did not abide within the bounds of the Love he might lawfully entertain towards the Creatures, but Lov'd them with the ſame affection which was due to God alone; and thus changing the order eſtabliſhed by God he highly offended him, and ruin'd himſelf, with all his Poſterity, having acted directly contrary to the deſigns and purpoſe of God, who would have a

(d) *Jam.* i. 17.

Creature

Creature that Lov'd him with all its Heart, that he might take his Delights with it. But Man, in contempt of his God, of his own Free-Will turn'd away his Love from God towards the Earthly Creatures, and became fond of them to the prejudice of the Love which he ow'd entirely to his God. Not that Man had in himſelf this Evil Inclination to offend God; but he amuſing himſelf with beholding the Beauty of ſo many divers Creatures, they by little and little gain'd upon his Heart. He was in a Paradiſe of Delights, where all was perfectly Good and Beautiful, as the Works of God always are; for in them there is no defect, and they are ſtill fully perfect and compleat in all points. This raviſhed the Mind of *Adam*, while he beheld them with his Eyes, and admired and contemplated them with his Spirit: At laſt they gain'd upon his Affections, and he delighting himſelf in them came to Love them, as *David* fell in Love with *Bathſheba* when he beheld her Waſhing her ſelf; though he had already many other Wives, yet he Luſted after her from the meer motion of his Corrupt Nature, forgetting his God and his Faith, that he might ſatisfy his Corrupt Luſt. Thus *Adam* forgot his Faith and his Love which he ow'd to God, to delight himſelf in natural Senſibilities; how ſoon the Beauties of thoſe Creatures had charm'd his Senſes, he turn'd all his Affections thither, inſtead of turning them conſtantly towards the Author of all Creatures; and like an unthankful Perſon, he cleav'd more to the Gifts, than to the Giver. And whereas it had pleaſed God to make Man Free, he would not becauſe of Man's Fault change this his purpoſe: He left him, as he will always leave Men free to Act, by their Free-Will either in Good or Evil, as they think Good. Lo, this is the reaſon why *Adam* could Sin, though he was created by God, with inclinations for Good: He acted againſt his natural Inclinations, by a pure amuſement of Mind, being idle amidſt full delights, he let himſelf fall from the higheſt Felicity, to the moſt profound depth of all Miſeries, whither he has alſo drawn with him the whole Race of Mankind, who were then all of them in the Loins of *Adam*.

§. 117. He hath undone them all with himſelf, none excepted, ſave Jeſus Chriſt the only Son of Man, who was born of *Adam* before his Fall, and even for this may juſtly be called the only Son of God, ſince of all Men he only continued without Sin. All other Men ſinn'd in *Adam*, and thereafter alſo by their own Wills; which is nothing ſtrange, ſeeing all Men are conceiv'd in Sin, and born Children of Wrath and of Perdition, none being excepted ſince *Adam*'s

Fall

Fall; though ſome would diſpute about the Conception of the Virgin *Mary*, who nevertheleſs was a Daughter of *Adam* as well as others, who are all come of this corrupt Maſs of *Adam*, and he could beget none but ſuch as were like himſelf, Enemies of God, as he himſelf was. So begotten in Sin, how holily ſoever they may have lived ſince they came to the Uſe of their Reaſon, they have always had a Bent and Inclination to Evil by *Adam*'s Fall; but nevertheleſs they have not been conſtrain'd to Evil, for their Free-will ſhall never be taken from them.

§. 118. After that God had once will'd that Man ſhould be free, he cannot repent him of it, but will leave this Liberty to Man to all Eternity: Whether he do Good or Evil, God will never retract his Liberty that he hath given him. The Souls of the Bleſſed, and thoſe of the Damned, ſhall always have their Free-will: And the Bleſſed ſhall uſe this Liberty to praiſe and bleſs God therewith; but miſerable Souls ſhall employ it to curſe God, without Repentance; whereas the Bleſſed ſhall for ever bleſs God without ceaſing: And thus thoſe bleſſed and miſerable Souls ſet Bounds to their own Wills; they willing abſolutely with their deliberate Free-will, the Bleſſed never to do Evil, and the Wicked never to do Good. Thus thoſe Two ſorts of Perſons do remain limited to Good and Evil by their abſolute Wills, which they have at Death, with a Reſolution never to will a Change. This makes the Bleſſed and the Miſerable Eternity, which can never end; ſeeing the Wills of thoſe free Perſons are Eternal.

§ 119. For God made not Hell, nor any thing that is evil. Man and the Devil are the Authors of all Evil, and God alone has done all Good for thoſe, who with their Free-wills do ſeek and deſire him; ſo that Good and Evil is in the Free-will of Man: And though it is written, *That Good and Evil proceed from God*, yet this Evil comes but indirectly from (e) God, ſeeing he can never directly do Evil; as Murther is not to be imputed to the Armourer who made the Weapon with which the Man is killed, ſeeing this Murther proceeds from the Heart and Will of him who abuſed this Weapon: The Armourer did well in making a Weapon of a good Temper for the good Uſe of him who bid him make it; he only who abuſeth it does all the Evil that may ariſe from the Abuſe of this Weapon, which might have been helpful and ſerviceable to him, had he uſed it aright. If

(e) *Amos* iii. 6.

God

God had created Man a limited Creature, without giving him a Free-will, he could never have ſinn'd, nor gone beyond his Limits; for all that God makes is permanent, without Mutation or Change; and Man would have remain'd obedient to God in the State in which he was created, enclined to do all Good. But God, willing to have a more noble Creature than all the reſt, was pleaſed to create Man altogether free, as a little God, to do or not to do what he pleaſed, obliging him only to love him as his Lord, his Creator, and his Father, every thing elſe being free to him: He made him alſo to rule over all the other Creatures, who were ſubjected to him as their King and their Lord, whom they ought to obey, as Man ought to obey his God. Thus Man was made free to rule and command them as a little God, ſubject only to the *Great Eternal* GOD. Wherefore it is recorded in the Holy Scriptures, that before the Creation of Man, God ſaid, (f) *Let us make Man in our Image, after our Likeneſs.* Now this Man could not more nearly reſemble God, than in the Liberty of his Will, to do all that he would, ſince all obey'd him. For in no other thing can Man be compared unto God, Man being a corporeal and material Creature, whereas God is a pure Spirit, inviſible and incomprehenſible, who cannot be compared to, nor reſemble any thing. So that the only Quality of Liberty makes Man like unto God, and renders that evident which God ſaid, *Let us make Man after our Likeneſs.* And the Scripture confirms this to have been done, ſaying, (g) *Ye are Gods, to whom the Word is ſent.* Now if this was the greateſt Favour done to Man, to have left him a Free-will to do what he pleaſed, muſt it now be believ'd, that this Divine Quality of his Liberty was the Cauſe of his Fall and of his Sin, as many ignorant People do groundleſsly imagine? Seeing God is no more the Cauſe of *Adam*'s Fall, than the Armorer is the Cauſe of the Murther committed with the Weapon, which he had perfectly well made for the good Uſe of the Man for whom he made it. For God could do no greater Favour to Man, than to create him in his Free-will: But if this ungrateful Creature abuſe his Liberty, the Creator of this Perfection is not to be blam'd, but he who abuſes it; though indirectly it is God who maketh Good and Evil, he having beſtow'd on Man the Faculty of doing Good and [illegible] by the Liberty which he gave him.

(f) Gen. i. 26. (g) *Pſal.* lxxxii. 6. *John* x. 34.

§. 120. But

§. 120. But it does not follow from this, that God co-operates to Evil in any wiſe; for Evil being an Impotency, can never be found in God, though indeed it may happen to be found in the Works of God. For Example; Man is a Creature form'd by God in full Perfection, and in full Power to do Good and Evil by his Liberty, which was ſo freely given him, not to do Evil, or to become impotent; but to uſe it well, according to the Will and Purpoſes of God. But this ungrateful Creature, inſtead of uſing this Liberty and his Power aright, abuſes all theſe Things, and renders the Work of God impotent and unfruitful as to Good, though by its Creation it was powerful and fruitful in Good. Thus the Evil that is in the Works of God does not proceed from God, but from the perverſe Will of Man, who has polluted and corrupted God's Handywork even by the Perfection given him; abuſing God's greateſt Favours to offend him by them, and rendring that beautiful Image and Likeneſs of God altogether deform'd and monſtrous. Behold from whence all the Evil that we ſee in God's Works doth proceed, namely, from the Free-will of Man, who being created a little God, has made himſelf a Devil; even as the Angels, theſe Celeſtial Spirits, by their own Free-wills made themſelves ſo hideous Devils, after they had been created by God ſuch beautiful Creatures, though leſs perfect than Men; for the Angels were not made after the Likeneſs of God, as was Man; neither are they called in the Scripture Gods, as Men are, who by Participation with the true God, are called *Gods, thoſe to whom the Word is ſent.*

§. 121. Such are all Chriſtians who have known the Goſpel. To them the Word of God is addreſſed by Jeſus Chriſt: That Word which Created the Heavens and the Earth has always been in God, by which he Communicates his goodneſs. But that after his Creatures had loſt the Underſtanding of the Word of their God, his Word became Fleſh, and dwelt among Men, that they might the better Underſtand it by an Organ like unto themſelves. This the Scripture confirms, ſaying, (h) *The Word was made Fleſh, and dwelt among us,* and that to Teach Men the Will of God the Father. Yet it is not to be thought that all Chriſtians to whom the Goſpel has been communicated are Gods; for nothing is well given, if the Gift is not Accepted. The Word of God was ſent upon Earth by Jeſus Chriſt, but it has not been received by thoſe to whom it was ſent: How many are

(h) *John* i. 14.

there

there who know the Gospel Law, and do not Observe it, but harden their Hearts against the Lord's Call? It is of these Christians that the Scripture saith (i) *Many are called, but few are Chosen.* For they who have known the Gospel are all called; but none of them are Chosen, but such as with their free Wills do Chuse and Embrace this Holy Doctrine to observe and follow it even unto Death.

§. 122. Men should not Gloss and Wrest the Scripture to pervert its sense and meaning, as many say that God has chosen some, and rejected others: Since this is false; for with God *there is no respect of Persons.* He chuses for Salvation all Men in general, having in effect Created them all for this end: And since the Fall, he has also sent his Word to all Men; for Jesus Christ said to his Apostles; *Go and Teach all Nations, Baptizing them, &c.* Tho' at first he said, (k) *He was not sent but to the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel.* So that neither God nor Christ are come among Men to chuse only some of them, but to call all Men in general, and each of them in Particular unto Salvation, which is the end of their Creation. But they who turn a Deaf Ear, and will not hearken unto the Voice of the Lord, these are look'd upon as not called; because they would not obey their Call, chusing rather to follow the Corruption of the Flesh, than the Call which God gives them to Salvation: This is verified in the Scripture, where it is said, (l) *That Light is come into the World, and Men have loved their Darkness more than the Light.* Hence we may understand that very few are chosen, that is there are few who chuse to Obey the Word of God, or the Gospel, in their Practice, tho' from the beginning of the World no other have been or are chosen, but they who do this. No State or Dignity, how great or Holy soever, can make a Man to be one of the Elect without this practice. *David* and *Solomon*, and all the Pariarchs and Prophets could never have been among the other Elect without the Practice of a *Gospel Life*, yea even the Dignity of the *Virgin Mary* could not have plac'd her in the Number of the Elect, if she had not lived a *Gospel Life*; for there can be no Election of any who does not deliberately with his free Will chuse the Word of God in the Accomplishing of a Gospel Life. Let Men Gloss and Dispute as much as they will about this Election or Reprobation; there will never be any other true sense of it than what I here declare to you by the Will of God. And tho' the Scripture speaks of having chosen *Jacob*, and rejected *Esau*, yet these

(i) *Matth.* xx. 16. (k) *Matth.* xv. 24. (l) *John.* iii. 19.

are only figures to make Men understand that God chuseth always the Good, and always rejects the Evil, as I have clearly shewn in my other Writings; or to say better, *Jacob* is the Person who yields up himself entirely to be govern'd by God, and denies his own Will: And *Esau* is the figure of him who in this World will follow the motions of Corrupt Nature. After this manner it is that God hath chosen *Jacob*, who obeys the Will of his Eternal Father; and rejects *Esau*, who will follow his Self-Love and his Carnal Lusts: For the Old Testament is the figure of the New; and the New Testament of Jesus Christ is the figure of the fulness of Times, wherein all Prophecies shall be accomplished, and the whole Scripture shall be understood in its perfect Sense; though it is not spoken but by Parables, or in Part, the perfect Sense shall be fulfilled in full Perfection in the last Days, in which we now Live, where leaving that which is a part only, we *shall understand in full Perfection*, (*m*) and see the compleat Sense of every thing, and all doubts and disputes shall be laid aside. The Truth shall be known as it is, and no longer as Men do falsly figure and represent it, *to deceive if it were possible the very Elect* (*n*). Which is not possible as to those Elect, who denying themselves, are entirely resign'd to the Will of God, who will preserve and guard them from the Snares of the Devil and Wicked Men: But well-meaning People will assuredly be deceived by the false shew of Vertue, with which now the Devil covers himself, that he may deceive the well-meaning, making them oft-times to believe that they are of the Elect, because they are called Christians, or for that they were Baptized, or for that they are of such a Sect and Religion; which is nothing but the deceit and amusement of Satan: For none are Christians but they who follow in Practice the Doctrine of the Gospel; and none are truly Baptized but they who follow and imitate Jesus Christ, as a Soldier follows and obeys his Captain; and there is no saving Religion, but the Christian Religion, established by Jesus Christ in the Primitive Church.

§. 123. All these things being most true, we may judge how few are now chosen, and how few there are to whom it may be said, (*o*) *Ye are Gods to whom the word is sent*; when we see that so few receive the Word of God to put it in Practice according to the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, by denying Corrupt Nature, that they may recover the State of Innocence and Perfection in which we were Created by God;

(m) 1 *Cor.* xiii. 10. (n) *Matth.* xxiv. 24. (o) *Psal.* lxxxii. 6.

seeing

ſeeing none ſhall come to God, but they who put off the old Garment of Corruption, derived from our Father *Adam*, that they may be cloathed with the new Robe of the new *Adam*, who is Jeſus Chriſt. Theſe only are the *Children of God* to whom I ſpeak now; for no others can juſtly be call'd the Children of God; all thoſe who live according to the motions of their Corrupt Nature, being *Children of the Devil*, and of Perdition (*p*).

§. 124. For though *Adam* had never Sinn'd, all Men in general, and every one of them in particular, might Sin and undo himſelf, by delighting in the Creatures, as *Adam* did, who plac'd his Affections on the Creatures, which he beheld in the Earthly Paradiſe; their Perfections gained the Heart of *Adam*, and made him ſet his Love on them, inſtead of cleaving by it unto God alone. This was the Eſſence and Seed Plot of all kind of Sin, by which he deſtroyed himſelf with all his Poſterity: Even as all others alſo deſtroy themſelves, who in this World will needs ſet their Affections on Earthly things, with this difference, that *Adam* Ruin'd in himſelf the whole Race of Mankind, which he then bore in his Loins, whereas other Men do only damn themſelves, and have power only over their own Off-ſpring.

§. 125. But they are ſo much the more blameworthy for Damning themſelves, that the Objects which they Love in this Miſerable World are in nothing comparable to the Beauty, Goodneſs, and Perfection of the Creatures of the Terreſtrial Paradiſe, which were capable of Charming and Captivating the Heart and Mind of Man, by their Excellencies; whereas that which Men Love in this World are nothing but Filth, and vile and ugly things, if compared with thoſe of that Paradiſe of Delights, which were Good, Beautiful and Compleat in all kinds of Perfection: So that it is not ſo much to be wonder'd, that *Adam* ſet his Affections on things ſo Perfect, as that Men now in this World ſhould (to the loſs of their Salvation) ſet their Affections on Corruptible Food, which charges and loads the Stomach; or on dull and heavy Metals, ſuch as Gold and Silver, which in themſelves have no lovely Qualities, nor any agreeableneſs to human Nature, and afford a Man nothing but diſquiet and troubleſome care and labour to acquire and keep them. There is yet one thing of leſs conſideration in this World on which Men place all their Affections; and that is, the Glory and Honor which Men render unto one another; a thing as frail

(*p*) *Joh.* viii. 44.

and variable as the Wind, which abides for ſo ſhort a time, and is ſubject to ſo much inconſtancy and change. Are not all theſe things unworthy to be Lov'd by Man, that Maſterpiece of the Works of God; that noble Creature, made after the Likeneſs of God, to be his Son, and the Heir of his Kingdom; that he ſhould turn away his Heart from God his Creator, to Love the pitiful things of the Earth! He is far more blameable than *Adam* was in Loving the Creatures which he beheld in Paradiſe, which did afford Pleaſures to the Natural Senſes in full Perfection; whereas the Pleaſures of this miſerable Life do only tickle the Senſes, without giving them any Satisfaction.

§. 126. For he who ſets his Heart on Meat and Drink, is never ſatisfied, but ſtill deſires ſomething that he has not: One ſort of Meat ſeems too aiger to his Taſt, another too ſweet; and though all of them ſhould pleaſe his Taſt, yet they ſoon deſcend from the Palate to the Stomach, where the moſt delicious Meat is changed into ſtink, and thereafter into Corruption, which would make the Stomach riſe if one was to eat it again. And for carnal Pleaſures they are ſo ſhameful, that an honeſt Heart would not think of them without Horrour; and as to the Coveting the Wealth of this World, this ſerves only to diſquiet a Man's Heart and Spirit, and never ſatisfies them; but as ſalt Water encreaſes the Thirſt of thoſe who Drink it, ſo the more they have of theſe, the more they covet them: The ſame alſo does the thirſting after this World's Glory: He who delights in it is never ſatisfied; if he have obtain'd one degree of it, he covets another; and if he has got that, he deſires a third: Thus this thirſt after Honour goes on Inſatiably without meaſure. By which it may appear, that Man now Sins more in ſetting his Affections on ſo vile and imperfect Creatures, than *Adam* did in placing them upon the beautiful and perfect Creatures of the Earthly Paradiſe: Though both have done Evil, yet Men now do much worſe in reſpect of the Objects which they Love, which are no ways Lovely in comrariſon of the Creatures which *Adam* Lov'd in the Earthly Paradiſe; tho' all Men deſpiſe or curſe *Adam* for his Fall, without conſidering that they themſelves do Fall every Day far more groſsly than he did; becauſe of the vaſt difference there is between the Objects which *Adam* Lov'd, and thoſe which Men now do Love, being altogether unworthy of the Affections of ſo Noble a Creature as Man is, who is capable of Loving his God.

§. 127. Is it not lamentable to ſee Men, who are endued with underſtanding and reaſon, abandon eternal Delights, which

which they would undoubtedly have by abiding in the Love of God, for this World's Trifles, which keep their Affections glew'd to them; ſome to a little Money, ſome to a little Meat or Drink, ſome to a blaſt of Honour which Men give to one another; and that for things of ſo ſmall value, they loſe ſo great a Happineſs, both Temporal and Eternal: For none is more happy in this World than he who abandoning his own Will to follow God's, lives in the Liberty of his Child, and is carried in his Father's Arms; he is in peace and quiet, knowing that his Father will preſerve and guide him: He is joyful and contented without fear or care; for he neither ſeeks nor hopes for any thing in this World but what is neceſſary for him, which God will always undoubtedly give him, according to his Promiſe, when he ſays, (q) *Seek firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs; and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you*: As thoſe experience who are reſign'd to God. I have done it. I have found it true, and I experience daily the Care that God has for my Body and for my Soul; and I find, that after having overcome the Inclinations of Corrupt Nature, I have been a Queen, ruling over all my Vicious Paſſions, to which formerly I was a Slave, as all thoſe are who ſuffer themſelves to be govern'd by the fury of their Paſſions, which do continually torment and tyranize over them: So that many times it were far better to be a Slave in the Gallies, than to be Subjected to Vicious Paſſions, which do tyrannize over and rack the Soul and the inward Man, diſquiets the Mind and Conſcience of thoſe who are ſubjected to them, and after having Liv'd under this Slavery here, at Death they find themſelves condemn'd to Hell for all Eternity.

§. 128. Behold the Temporal and Eternal Miſery that befals him who in this World will not War againſt his *Corrupt Nature*: He is the Slave of the Devil; yea, he himſelf is a Devil: For there is no difference between the Devil's Fall, and the Fall of Man: ſeeing both of them being the Creatures of God, made to Love him freely, they have equally withdrawn their Affections to Love ſome other thing than God. The Angel Loving himſelf, aſpired to be yet greater, and more perfect than God had made him; and Man Loving himſelf, had likewiſe the ſame Ambition: wherefore the Devil was able to perſwade *Eve* and *Adam* that they ſhould be God's if they did Eat of the Tree of Knowledge, of which God had forbidden them to Eat. This Self-love, and Self-eſteem,

(q) *Matt.* vi. 33.

made those two Free Creatures withdraw the Affection they ow'd to God, to Love whom was the End for which they were equally Created; ſo that both of them falling into the ſame Sin, they Conſequently incurred the ſame Diſgrace; the Angels becoming Spiritual Devils, and Men Corporal Devils, as they will continue to be to all Eternity, if during this Life, they do not renounce this Ambition and this Self-Love, and thoſe other Sins which theſe things have brought forth in their Souls; for they Living yet in their time of Trial, may withſtand and overcome this Self-Love. This is no longer in the Devils power, ſeeing his time of Trial is Ended, and will never return again. It has continued indeed for a long time, ſeeing there is ſo great a Number of Angels, and likewiſe of Devils. For tho' God Created diverſe Angels, yea, diverſe Hierarchies, yet he did not Create ſo great a Number of them. Both Good and Evil Angels have Multiplyed ſince their Creation, as Men have Multiplied ſince *Adam*, the Evil as well as the Good; for every thing that has Life doth ſtill Produce its like; ſo that the perverſe Generation of Men has Encreas'd more than the Good. And as there are more Devils than Good Angels, ſo likewiſe there are more Men Devils than Saints, who will Multiply greatly after their time of Trial ſhall be over, and when they ſhall Live under the Government of Jeſus Chriſt: Then they ſhall Produce compleat and perfect Men as they were at the time of their Creation. This will be a Holy Generation, over which the Devil ſhall have no Power; and all the Wicked ſhall with the Devils be Confin'd to Hell, having merited the ſame Torments by their Rebellion againſt God, who Created them to Love him only.

§. 129. Sin has made Hell, the Devils, and the Damned; for God cannot make any thing that is Evil, neither can he Damn any. The Devils Damned themſelves by their Sins; and Men have done the ſame, repleniſhing Hell, which the Devils had prepared. We muſt not think that God has deſign'd a particular place for Hell, ſeeing it is yet thro' all the World. Wherever the Devils Tempt Men, Tumbling thro' the Air, and going Subtily thro' all, there is Hell until the whole time of Trial ſhall be over: Then God will Separate the Light from the Darkneſs, placing his Sheep upon his Right Hand, and the Goats upon his Left. It is for this reaſon that the Devil is ſo much afraid of the laſt Judgment; becauſe he knows he ſhall then be ſhut up into ſome Corner of the Earth, without being able to get out, being lockt up into

into that Dreadful Priſon, where all the Miſchiefs and Evils that Sin has brought upon Nature, ſhall be gathered together for the Puniſhment of Devils and Damned Souls, who ſhall be all ſhut up in one place, as we may know by the ſentence of the Judgment, when the Judge ſhall ſay, (r) *Go, ye Curſed, into everlaſting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* Now the Devils Angels are they who do his Will; as the Angels of God are theſe who do the Will of God: Theſe are bleſſed of God: But to thoſe who have followed their own Wills, which is Corrupted by Sin, it ſhall be ſaid; *Go ye Curſed, depart from me; ſince ye in your Life time departed wilfully from my Will, and would not follow it, tho' it was ſo Good and Perfect, but Rebelled againſt it, and followed the Devil's Will, becoming his Angels ready to Obey him. Go now with him into the Hell which he hath prepared for you.*

§. 130. It is true that the Devils and Damned Souls are in Hell, ſince they carry about with them every where their Hell, and have no Degree of Peace or Quiet, being rack't in Conſcience, and Tormented in their Bodies; and tho' to their Adherents they feign to be joyful, they are indeed Darkneſs and Melancholy it ſelf. But they being deſirous to catch Mens Souls, deceive them with falſe appearances, yea, they Transform themſelves into Angels of Light, that they may ſeduce the well-meaning, and draw into their Wretched train as many of the race of mankind as they can, and that from the Spirit of pure Jealouſie and Envy, while they ſee that thoſe Men who are faithful unto God ſhall Inherit his Throne in the Heavens, which thoſe Devils ſhould have Inherited if they had continued faithful unto God. For this reaſon, the Devils have conceived a Mortal hatred againſt Man, and they go about Night and Day Tempting him that they may draw him unto them, and make him the Companion of their Miſeries: For tho' all the Men of the World were Damned, the Devil could have no eaſe by it; on the contrary, this would augment the Cries, Howlings and Blaſphemies of Hell, whither they would bring a greater Stink, proceeding from the Bodies of thoſe Damned Men, who draw along with them all the Curſes and Miſchiefs that Sin hath brought upon Nature; for all thoſe Evils are the Lot and Portion of the Damned: And for this cauſe the Devils will the more torment the Damned, who ſhall be wholly in their power to do them all the Miſchief that their Fury ſhall Suggeſt.

§. 131. Lo theſe are the Wages of thoſe who in this

(r) *Matth.* xxv. 41.

World have followed their own Will or the Will of the Devil; which is the ſame thing: ſeeing the Will of Corrupt Nature is the Will of the Devil himſelf: For theſe two Wills are equally perverted, and there is as much Evil in the Will of Man Corrupted by Sin, as there is in the Will of the Devil himſelf. This I ſay, for the ſake of Well-meaning People, who are perſwaded that they ſhall be Saved, if ſo be they are not guilty of Groſs outward Sins, ſuch as Lying, Stealing, Drunkenneſs, Whoring, Swearing, Perjury, or any other thing that is blame-worthy before Men: On the contrary, they go to Church, they give of their Goods to the Poor, they go to the Lords Table, and obſerve other outward Duties of Piety and Devotion, which Men reckon to be Good Works. Such would aſſuredly promiſe to themſelves Salvation, and thank God with the Phariſee, that they are not ſuch Sinners as the Publican; tho' his humility did juſtify him more than all the good Works of that Phariſee. For God does not regard our outward appearance, but the contrite Heart which will Fight againſt its *corrupt Nature*, by denying its *own Will*, that it may be entirely reſigned to the Will of God. Theſe are the Angels of God, who at Death ſhall enter into his Glory, and ſhall do his Will to all Eternity in Heaven, as they have done it upon Earth, according to that Petition of our Lord's Prayer, by which we pray (*s*), *That his Will may be done here on Earth as in Heaven.*

§. 132. But all thoſe who ſay this Prayer do not think upon doing the Will of God, as they do it who are in Heaven: for we ſee them Wedded to their ſelf Will, abſolutely and obſtinately reſolved to follow and fulfil it as much as they can, and counting it a misfortune not to follow it. By which it may appear, how far Chriſtians are now eſtrang'd from their Salvation, which conſiſts in the denying of their own Wills, which they will not put in practice, but they imagine they ſhall be Saved without renouncing their own Wills. By this many well-meaning People are deceived; for it is a deceit of Satan, to believe that they ſhall be Saved while they Die in their Self-Love; ſeeing this is the Enemy of God, and has cauſed the Damnation of both Devils and Men, who are in Hell. All of them are loſt by withdrawing their affections from God to Love themſelves; this is the Eſſence of all Sin. For this Self-Love directly reſpects God, and oppoſes it ſelf to the deſigns he had in Creating Man for this only End, to be loved by him. But Men, who look only to the bark and the outſide, do imagine

(*s*) *Matth.* vi. 10.

that

that no other Sins can Damn them but Evil Works, which paſs for ſuch in the Opinion of Men, as to deceive, to Steal, to Kill, to Whore, to be Drunk, and ſuch like Wicked Actions; tho' all theſe things are but the accidents of Sin, and not the Eſſence of it, which conſiſts in the withdrawing of one's affections from God to ſet them upon doing unjuſtly, or covering another Mans Goods, or upon a Spirit of Revenge, or Anger, or Luxury, and Gluttony: It matters little with God upon what Object we place our affections, when we turn them away from him to ſet them on other things. Conſider now, Children of God, if thoſe Perſons are not deceived, who hope for Salvation, and reckon themſelves aſſured of it when they do not commit Groſs Sins, but are morally good according to the courſe of the World; tho' in the Goſpel there is ſo clear an Example given us of a rich Man, who was buried in Hell becauſe he fared Deliciouſly, and was Cloathed Sumptuouſly, while the Scripture makes no mention of any other outward Sins that he committed, but this of his Self Love, taking his eaſe and pleaſure, without regarding the Miſeries of his Neighbour. And I know very few People in the World who do not lead ſuch a Life as this rich Man did, when they have the Conveniencies to do it; and yet they all hope to be Saved upon their abſtaining from thoſe groſs Sins, which they reckon are only capable to Damn them.

§. 133. What ſtrange blindneſs! That after Men know they are Conceived and Born in Sin, and Enemies of God, they will yet hope for Salvation without having made War againſt this Sin, and recovered the Love of God? This is a deplorable Blindneſs, and a Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, to hope thus for Salvation, without having overcome their corrupt Nature, the Enemy of God, and a Stickler for the Devil. Do we not perceive that it is of our time the Prophet Speaks (t); That *the whole Earth is covered with Darkneſs, and that Blindneſs has overtaken all the People*? For what thicker Darkneſs could there be upon the Earth than not to ſee that God neither Created us, nor the other Creatures, in the State in which we ſee all things now, full of Miſeries and Imperfections? Would a God ſo powerful and perfect leave ſo many defects and malignities in the Body and Spirit of Man, yea, and in that of the Beaſts, in the Elements, and in all Nature? Ought we not to Judge aright that Sin has brought all theſe Evils upon Men and Beaſts, ſo that even the leaſt

(t) *Iſai.* lx. 2.

Fly

Fly does Miſchief to Man, and a Flea or a Gnat will make him loſe his Reſt? Is it to be thought, that God, having been pleaſed to make a Creature after his Likeneſs, would ſubject him to the Power of ſo many little Inſects and wild Beaſts, which kill Men, yea, and to the Air and its Influences? No, no, this cannot be true; the Sin of Man, and nothing elſe, is the Cauſe of all thoſe Miſeries: And even as the Devils have made Hell, ſo Man likewiſe has cauſed all the Miſeries that we ſee in this World; ſo that this is a Temporal Hell, as the Hell of the Devils is an Eternal one: All this proceeding from Sin only, from whence alſo the particular Damnation of Man comes. And this Man being damned by his Sin, how could he ſave himſelf without forſaking it? Does he imagine, that he can carry his Sin along with him into Paradiſe? Seeing he will not forſake it in this Life, he muſt of Neceſſity Eternally periſh. By which we ſee the Neceſſity of his denying himſelf, and reſiſting his own Will, ſeeing the whole Eſſence of Sin conſiſts in the withdrawing one's ſelf from the Will of God to follow his own; and *thoſe who will not abſolutely and firmly reſolve to deny their own Wills, and reſiſt the Inclinations of their corrupt Natures, cannot look for Eternal Happineſs, ſeeing they live and die in Sin and Sin damns Man, and deprives him of Bleſſedneſs both in, Time, and throughout Eternity.*

§. 134. He who has conceived aright, that his Salvation and Damnation proceed from his own Will, will be far from hoping for Salvation, becauſe he does not commit groſs material Sins, ſince the Motions of Self-will are a Spiritual Thing, hid from Mens Eyes; and God only, who is the Searcher of Hearts, knows the Motions of Man's Will. It is therefore very ill done to judge well or ill of any Perſon. Judgment muſt be left to God alone, that we may not judge Good, Evil; or Evil, Good; ſeeing there is now ſo much Deceit, and it is written, (*u*) *That the Heart of Man is deceitful above all Things*, which deceives it ſelf, and does not believe that it is ſo corrupt and full of Sin from its Birth: But if a Man will examine himſelf narrowly, he ſhall find that all the Motions of his corrupt Nature are Sin; and if a Child were left without Inſtruction or Correction, he would naturally give himſelf to all kind of Evil. For tho' Children be inſtructed, and kept under Diſcipline; yet this Human Creature has always a bent to Evil and Sin, which ſtill abides in the Bottom of his Soul; though Decency or Civi-

(*u*) *Jer.* xvii. 9.

lity

lity with-hold him from doing Evil things outwardly, he retains in the Depth of his Heart all ſorts of Evil, until by Virtue he have ſubdued this natural Corruption: Then he acts without Sin, and never before, as the Scripture witneſſeth, ſaying, (x) *The Eye is never ſatisfied with Seeing, nor the Ear with Hearing, nor the Heart with Deſiring*; and in the mean time the Apoſtle tells us, that all *Concupiſcence* is *Sin*, adding of himſelf, (y) *That if the Law had not ſaid, that Covetouſneſs was Sin, he had not known it.* If this Apoſtle was thus blind, how much more may thoſe now-a-days be, who know nothing to be Sin, but groſs and outward Sins? Which, as I have ſaid, are the Signs or Accidents which Sin produceth outwardly, for the Eſſence of it reſides only in the Bottom of the Soul and of the Will. This Jeſus Chriſt taught us, when he ſaid to the *Phariſees*, *That which entreth into the Mouth doth not defile the Man*, (z) *but that which proceedeth out of the Heart*; becauſe there can be no other Sin, but that of turning our Affections to any other thing but God.

§. 135. He muſt be very blind who does not ſee this; for what need has God of all our Works, whether good or evil, which reſpect our Neighbour? He fixes upon that which we do with reſpect to himſelf, and wherein we oppoſe his Purpoſes. He was deſirous to have Creatures that might love him with all their Heart, as his Commands require, which ſay, (a) *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength*; that they may explain the better by ſo many different Words, that God would have Man's Affections entirely, and without the Mixture of any other Love. This is an immutable Decree, that will never be changed; whatever Gloſſes Men may put upon this Command of loving God, yet it ſhall never ceaſe to be true, that none have been or ſhall be ſaved, but they whoſe Souls at Death are endued with the Love of God; and that he who is then void of this Divine Love, carries along with him his Sentence of Condemnation, and goes to dwell in Everlaſting Fire with the Devil and his Angels; for ſo long as a Man is without the Love of God, he is out of his Grace and Favour; and if he die out of his Favour, he cannot be ſaved.

§. 136. And ſeeing Man, by *Adam*'s Fall, is born out of God's Favour, a Child of Wrath and Perdition, he cannot

(x) *Eccl.* i. 8. (y) *Rom.* vii. 7. (z) *Matth.* xv. 18. (a) *Matth.* xxii. 37.

hope

hope for Salvation, if he do not renounce this Corruption and Perdition, into which he has fallen by his Free-will, and without it he cannot riſe again. Man muſt employ all his Force to fight againſt this curſed State in which he is born; for none but himſelf can ever deliver him out of the Miſery into which he has plunged himſelf; ſeeing it was the Will of God to have him free, he will never invade this Liberty, but let Man enjoy it to all Eternity, to do Good or Evil as he will; and Jeſus Chriſt and his Merits will never do any thing againſt this Decree of God: Wherefore the Apoſtle tells Man, That his Life is a continual Warfare; and our Lord ſays, (b) *That the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffers Violence, and the Violent take it by Force.* If Man himſelf ought not to fight againſt his Corruption throughout all this Life, why would the Apoſtle ſay, That our Life is a continual Warfare; but he knew that our Corruption reſiſts continually the Purpoſe and Will of God; and unleſs a Man do continually reſiſt his Corruption, it continually oppoſes God's Will and Purpoſes, even as the Devils in Hell do. For this Life being a Temporal Hell, damned Souls do blaſpheme and contradict the Will of God, and follow their own Will, even as the Devils do in their Eternal Hell. And no Man ſhall ever enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who has done ſo much Violence to himſelf, as to overcome Nature, and ſubdue his natural Inclinations, which are always vicious: For though ſome think their Inclinations are good, yet they are always evil; ſeeing they proceed from the Corruption of the Old *Adam*. Wherefore the Scripture ſays, (c) *That he who ſays he is without Sin, is a Lyar*; ſeeing all Men, without Exception, are born, live and die in Sin: ſo long as they have not overcome their corrupt Nature; they are ſtill Sinners, Children of Wrath and Perdition.

§. 137. And though ſeveral Perſons believe they are without Sin, for that through Civility and good Manners they have moderated ſome of their Paſſions, ſuch as Wrath and Fury; yet they have not overcome their Corruption, which is ſtill alive in the Bottom of their Heart; and though ſometimes it ſeem to be aſleep, yet it awakens at the firſt Blow of Contradiction or Contempt that's given it. Theſe are only moral Vertues, which are of no Value with God; but they may ſerve to facilitate the Victory to him, who undertakes to overcome his corrupt Nature: For in a mild

(b) *Matth.* xi. 12. (c) 1 *John* i. 8.

and

and civil Nature one will not find ſo much Reſiſtance in overcoming his Corruption, as in a froward and brutiſh Temper. In this reſpect moral Vertues may be helpful in working out our Salvation. But he who contents himſelf with having acquired thoſe moral Vertues, and does not paſs through them to the Mortification of his Self-will, and of his corrupt Nature, his moral Vertues will ſerve him only for Hypocriſie and Vain-glory, while he deſires to ſeem vertuous, when he is not ſo in the Sight of God; whatever Eſteem Men may have for them, God condemns them. Upon this Account the Scripture ſays, (d) *God tries the Reins, and condemns our Righteouſneſs*: Seeing in us there is not any Good, nor any Righteouſneſs, but that which God works in us.

§. 138. All the reſt is Evil; and as no Good can proceed from the Devil, ſo no more can any Good proceed from corrupt Nature: And though ſometimes its Motions ſeem to be good, yet they are falſe and deceitful; they muſt not be follow'd nor eſteem'd; for there is none good but God, whom the Scripture truly calls, (e) *The only Holy One*. The Devil indeed ſometimes ſuggeſts to corrupt Nature Things ſeemingly good, that he may draw Evil out of them, and give a bad Iſſue to good Beginnings. Wherefore a Man muſt deny his own Will its good Deſires, as well as its evil, that he may not be deceived by it; for ſo long as we deny not our Self-will in all things, God will never accompliſh his Will in us. The Soul where God dwells muſt be free of all Deſires; and ſo long as we will this, and will not that, God cannot do in us what he wills, and his Graces will be barren in our Souls, which he lets act according to our Willing or Nilling, after our own Way; for the Will of God is too perfect to mingle it ſelf with our corrupt Will. It muſt be thruſt out by us, if we would have God to govern our Souls. Hence it is that ſo few are guided by the Holy Spirit, becauſe they will not forſake their own Wills, but love them ſo ſtrongly, that they will not part with them, chuſing rather to do Evil with their own Will, than to do Good with God's Will. This I have the Experience of, even in well-meaning Men; ſo powerful a Sway has this Self-love got over the Heart of Man, that it abſolutely rules and governs him to the Ruine and Damnation of his Soul.

(d) *Jer.* xvii. 10. (e) *Rev.* xv. 4.

§. 139.

§. 139. This very few are afraid of, though it is the moſt dangerous thing for leading to Hell; becauſe Men do not reckon this Self-love to be ſuch a Sin, as it is in the Sight of God; namely, the Source and Subſtance, or Eſſence of all Sin. For this Self-love made the Devil and Hell, and has alſo brought Damnation upon Men. It was out of the Love that *Adam* bore himſelf, that he turn'd his Affections to the Creatures, taking Complacency in them, inſtead of delighting himſelf in God alone, for which he was created: For we do not read, that *Adam* fell into any other kind of Sin, but that of having follow'd his own Will, even in Eating the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, when he knew well, by the Prohibition that was given him, that it was not the Will of God, but his own Will that led him to eat of that Tree, that he might know Good and Evil. This wretched Self-love and Self-eſteem made him prefer his own Will and Inclinations to the Will of God; and the ſame Self-love produces in Men all kind of Sins, and their Damnation: For one needs no more to bring him to Hell, than to follow his Self-love, as I have alſo ſaid heretofore; becauſe the Self-will of Man has been ſo corrupted by *Adam*'s Fall, that it cannot move but to do Evil and Sin: And if you ask me, What is it that damns Man? I will anſwer truly, That it is his Self-will, and nothing elſe, which has in its Power Hell and Paradiſe, ſince it may chuſe the one or the other, according to the Liberty in which God created Man.

§. 140. It is enough that it follow the Motions of its corrupt Nature, and of its own Will; for this comprehends in it all kinds of Sin; becauſe this Self-love directly oppoſes the Love of God; and he who loves himſelf cannot love God, and he who loves God cannot love himſelf. This is a good Sign whereby to diſcern whether one loves God or no: For though he affirm confidently, that he loves God, he lyes, if he ſtill loves and eſteems himſelf: Wherefore the Scripture ſaith, (*f*) *That all Men are Lyars*, without excepting any. Many imagine, that they love God, while they love themſelves: And this is impoſſible; for theſe Two Loves are as Heat and Cold, which cannot remain together in the ſame Subject: Of Neceſſity the one muſt drive out the other, for the Love of God is too pure to abide in a Soul with the Impurity of Self-love.

(f) *Pſal.* cxvi. 11.

XI.

The Three Pillars of Corruption.

§. 141. AND it muſt be the Effect of great Ignorance for ſuch to ſay, that they love God, when they yet love themſelves: For if they knew the Truth as it is before God, they would certainly judge, that they cannot love God while they love themſelves; ſince in the Love of God all Good conſiſts, and all Evil in the Love of our ſelves; for there is nothing in the corrupt Nature of Man, (g) but *the Luſt of the Eyes, the Luſt of the Fleſh, and the Pride of Life*, which are the Three Pillars upon which all corrupt Nature is ſeated, and when one or more of thoſe Pillars are ſhaken, the Edifice of one's Corruption is ſhaken or overthrown altogether.

§. 142. And as there is none deſcended from *Adam*, who has not theſe Three great Evils, the Enemies of God, to encounter with; ſo no Man ſhall be ſaved, who has not firſt overcome theſe Three Enemies of his Salvation. Firſt, *The Luſt of the Eyes*, conſiſting in all ſorts of Covetouſneſs, ſince naturally the Eye no ſooner ſees any thing that's pleaſant and agreeable, then preſently the Heart covets it, and ſo commits Sin; for the Apoſtle affirms, that all Covetouſneſs is Sin; that is, that Covetouſneſs reſpects not only Worldly Riches, but every other Object in which a Man delights: Hence our Lord ſays, (h) *That he who looks on a Woman to luſt after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his Heart.* Thus it is as to all other ſorts of Covetouſneſs, whether it be the Coveting Honours or Wealth, fine Houſes, pleaſant Walks, fine Cloaths, fine Furniture, good Wine, good Fare, and all that's good and pleaſant to the Eyes: All this is the Sin of Covetouſneſs, when your Heart deſires them; for a Child of God is not permitted to love or covet any other thing but God; for if we would fulfil his Commands, we muſt *love him with our whole Heart*; but Covetouſneſs is ſo natural to Man, that he ceaſes not to covet from his Cradle to his Grave. Hence the Scripture ſaith, (i) *That the Eye is never ſatisfied with Seeing, nor the Ear with Hearing*, until corrupt Nature be overcome: Then all Covetouſneſs ceaſes, yea, all Curioſity of ſeeing; for he who hath overcome his

(g) 1 *John* ii. 16. (h) *Matth.* v. 28. (i) *Eccl.* i. 8.

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Corruption is ſatisfied with God, and can no longer covet any thing, nor deſire any thing but what he poſſeſſeth, namely, his God, who ſatisfies all his Deſires and Curioſities. So that a Man muſt labour earneſtly to ſubdue and overcome this natural Covetouſneſs, and turn away his Eyes from the Objects that may move him to covet them. For this Reaſon, he ought to pray with *David*, and ſay, (*k*) *Turn away mine Eyes from beholding Vanity.*

§. 143. Seeing all that is upon Earth is Vanity, a Chriſtian Soul ought never to give Liberty to his Eyes to view every thing that offers it ſelf to them; but he ought to mortifie them, that they may ſee thoſe things only which they need to ſee, and not ſuffer them to look upon other things. This would be a Means to avoid many Sins; for the Eye is the Window of the Heart, by which many evil Thoughts of Covetouſneſs and Luſt do enter, which have a Train of many other Sins; as we ſee *David* fell into Adultery and Murther, after he had once given Liberty to his Eyes to behold *Bathſheba*. Wherefore a Chriſtian ought to employ all his Life in reſiſting this Covetouſneſs, which is ſo rooted in him from his Birth by *Adam*'s Fall; and in like manner the Second Pillar of corrupt Nature, which is the Luſt of the Fleſh, which being ſo ſtrongly rooted in the Heart, cannot, without much ſtriving, be driven out of it.

§. 144. This is that Luſt of the Fleſh, of which Jeſus Chriſt ſpoke to his Diſciples, under the Figure of one poſſeſs'd with a Devil, (*l*) *This kind goeth not out but by Prayer and Faſting.* Violence muſt be uſed againſt this Luſt of the Fleſh; and it muſt be overcome by Force, elſe it will maſter a Man, and make him go whether he would not: For we know, that the moſt excellent Men in the World have fall'n into heinous Sins, through this Luſt of the Fleſh: *David*, *Solomon*, *Sampſon*, and ſo many other Great Men, committed great Follies, when they yielded to this Luſt of their Fleſh; as the moſt part of Men do, who by reaſon of this Luſt, throw themſelves into all kind of Miſeries, both Temporal and Eternal. Seeing this Luſt of the Fleſh extends not only to the Pleaſures that are called Carnal, but likewiſe to all other Pleaſures that a Man deſires to give to his corrupt Nature; as in Meat, Drink, Reſt, Recreation, yea, in every ſort of carnal Delight, whatever the Subject of it may be; for all that gratifies the Senſualities of the Fleſh, is the Luſt of the Fleſh in Subſtance; ſeeing this Sin (even as other Sins) is

(k) *Pſal.* cxix. 37. (l) *Matth.* xvii. 21.

ſome

committed when a Man withdraws his Love from God, and ſeeks to pleaſe his corrupt Nature. For Example, when he delights to drink delicious Wine, to eat Meat greedily, that he may delight and ſatisfie his ſenſual Appetite, he falls into the Luſt of the Fleſh, and into the Divine Diſpleaſure, he having turn'd away the Love he owes to God alone, to place it upon the Meat and Drink that periſheth; preferring ſuch filthy Pleaſures to the Delight that is to be found in God; committing Adultery with ſuch vile Creatures, and violating the Faith he owes to his Creator, with whom alone he ought to delight himſelf, without delighting in any other thing.

§. 145. For he ought to reckon nothing worthy of his Love, he being Created to Love God. What unfaithfulneſs is he guilty of, who will needs delight in the Pleaſures of the Fleſh, or in thoſe of the Palate, or in vain Honours, or other ſenſual Pleaſures, which take up all the Affections! Mens Thoughts and Minds, their Labours and all their Cares, are taken up about theſe tranſitory Things, inſtead of being employed to bleſs God, who has made them what they are, and gives them all they have. Can ſuch an ingratitude paſs unpuniſhed? Has not God reaſon to baniſh far from him thoſe Carnal Men who will not take their delight in him, but in vile Creatures, even thoſe which God made not as they are now, nor ordain'd the uſe which they make of them; for Corruption and all that Sin has cauſed, was not made by God.

§. 146. The Meat we Eat was not made by God with that Corruption which we find to be in it. The Carnal Familiarity by which Mankind was multiplyed was not before Sin: for God having Created Man alone, with all the other Creatures, he ſaw them, and found that all was Good, tho' afterwards he ſays, (m) *It is not Good that Man ſhould be alone; I will make him an Help-Meet for him.* Could God be Ignorant from the beginning of Man's Creation that it was not good for Man to be alone? Or knew he it only ſince by Accident? No, no, there is nothing accidental in God. It was true when God beheld Man with all the other Creatures, they were all very Good; but after that God had given to *Adam* Dominion over the other Creatures, he abuſed it, and plac'd his Affections upon them, inſtead of preſerving them for God only. And this was the cauſe why God divided *Adam* into two parts, whereas before his Sin he was al-

(m) *Gen.* ii. 18.

together perfect, and capable of producing his own kind alone, which was very good; for then Man was not oblig'd to groan under the ſlavery of the Paſſions of a Bad Wife, as now it happens but too often; Man being obliged to join himſelf to this neceſſary Evil that he may beget Children by a Brutal Way which Sin has occaſioned, for it was not ſo in the beginning; but Man, enflam'd with the Love of his God, would have produc'd Children from this pure Love, altogether Holy, and without Blemiſh, pure from all Sin and Corruption, and Men entirely Perfect like Himſelf: Whereas now there are brought forth Monſters of Men and Women, both the one and the other being Imperfect: Which ſhall not be in the Kingdom of Heaven, where there ſhall not be Men and Women after that manner. This the Scripture confirms to us, where in reproving the Ignorance of him who ask'd, whoſe Wife ſhe ſhould be at the Reſurrection, who had Married ſeven Brethren, (n) it is ſaid, that *in the Kingdom of Heaven they neither Marry, nor are given in Marriage, but are as the Angels of God.* But they who read the Scriptures do not underſtand them, and conſequently are far from comprehending the Divine Myſteries.

§. 147. Men are too brutiſhly ſet upon Earthly Things, and Love too well their Carnal Luſts, to take any delight to underſtand Heavenly Things. They have only the underſtanding of Moles, to perceive that which is in the Earth; and for this reaſon they cleave to Sin, and to the Corruption that it has produc'd in Nature. This they Love becauſe they ſee nothing that is more Beautiful, more Good, or more Lovely: In which they differ nothing from the Beaſts, which have no claim to Eternal Life, they being only Earthly Creatures; whereas Man is a Divine Creature, who ought to Live only for a Bleſſed Eternity; which if he did, it would be impoſſible for him to delight in Carnal Luſts, which are ſhameful and filthy Things, unworthy of a generous Heart, that would aim at the end for which he was Created. But thoſe generous Souls are ſo rare that they may well be call'd a *Phœnix* upon Earth, where we ſee almoſt all of both Sexes ſet upon the *Luſt of the Fleſh*, as well as the *Luſt of the Eyes.* In which all Men are born, bringing nothing with them into the World, but theſe three Capital Vices, (o) *The Luſt of the Eyes, the Luſt of the Fleſh, and the Pride of Life.*

(n) *Matth.* xxii. 30. (o) 1 *John* ii. 16.

§. 148.

§. 148. Let none pretend that they do not perceive those Vices in themselves, seeing they are common to all the Posterity of *Adam*. None can say they are free of them, but he who having made War against his Corruption, has overcome it. As for all others, they are and will be Slaves of those three Enemies of Man to all Eternity, if during this short Life, they do not War against their Corruption and the Evil Inclinations in which they are born. This being supposed, is it not lamentable to see Men so blind and stupid, as to lose the Honour and Dignity of God's Children, the Inheritance of Eternal Life, with all its Prerogatives, for the Lust of a few Perishing Things, or for some Infamous Carnal Pleasure, or a little Corruptible Food, which turns into Dung so soon as it is swallowed; and that they prefer such Fading and Transitory Things to the Eternal Happiness they might enjoy in Heaven in Communion with God in the highest Delight and Bliss? Is not this to make a very poor choice (even tho' the Pleasures of this Life, were true and real Pleasures; whereas they are false, troublesome, and unconstant;) for Carnal Pleasures to deprive themselves of Eternal Joys, which will never end? Could there be a greater Folly imagined then this of parting with the Right of an Heir to the Kingdom of Heaven, that he may inherit the Pleasures of this Short and Wretched Life? For it must not be thought that he who takes his Pleasures here, shall likewise enjoy Eternal Blessedness hereafter: Such an Imagination is a Trick of the Devil, that by such false Hopes he may undo Men with himself, (p) for *no unclean Thing shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, and all the Pleasures of this Life do pollute and defile Mens Souls, as the Gospel makes appear in the Person of the Rich Man, who was buried in Hell for his fine Cloathing and sumptuous Diet.

§. 149. If Pomp and Gluttony did not defile Souls, why should the Rich Man have been buried in Hell? Had not he as much Reason to hope for Paradise after having fed delicately, and been gorgeously apparell'd here, as the Gluttonous and the Luxurious People of this Age, who believe they shall go to Paradise after Death, though they will needs have one in this World, and take the finest and the best of every thing for their Use, and all the Pleasures they can have, without regarding what the Scripture saith of the Whore, (q) *How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much Torment and Sorrow give her*; and that ac-

(p) *Rev.* xxi. 27. (q) *Rev.* xviii. 7.

cording to the Pleaſures a Man takes here, he ſhall receive a ſuitable meaſure of Torments hereafter; and according as a Man hath Suffered with Patience in this World, he ſhall be made Partaker of Glory and Bliſs in the World that is to come: Which is alſo verified by the Scripture in the Perſon of Poor *Lazarus, who after his Death was carried into* Abraham's *Boſom*, from whom *the Rich Man begg'd a Drop of Water to Cool his Tongue*; and inſtead of obtaining this Refreſhment, It was ſaid to him, (r) Remember that *Thou in thy Life time receiveds't thy Good Things, and likewiſe* Lazarus *Evil Things; but now he is Comforted, and thou art Tormented.* Behold the Scripture Evidences, which make appear that a Man cannot have two Paradiſes, namely, his Pleaſures in this World, and Eternal Joys in the other: Beſides that it is likewiſe written, (s) *That Fleſh and Blood ſhall not Inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.*

§. 150. And how ſhould the Luſt of the Eyes, and the Luſt of the Fleſh inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, thoſe two being the Enemies of God, which withdraw a Man from his Divine Love, and make him place his Affections on thoſe naſty, ſhameful, and filthy Things, which were not Created by God, but cauſed by Sin? Men blame *Adam* for becoming fond of the Creatures of the Earthly Paradiſe, and they do not blame themſelves for ſetting their Hearts on things ſo filthy and imperfect: For the Fruits of the Earthly Paradiſe were ſo delicious and ſubſtantial, that one needed only touch them with his Lips, to be wholly ſatisfied by them with more delight than the moſt delicious Diſhes, and all the Delights of Taſte in this World, put together, could afford; and there was no need but to ſuck the Eſſence of them, to be nouriſh'd and fill'd with them. But now what Care and Pains muſt one take before he can put a delicate Morſel into his Mouth? He muſt firſt get Money wherewith to buy it; he muſt Waſh and Cleanſe it from its Filth; he muſt have Fire to Boyl it, a Cook to Dreſs and Seaſon it, and Appetite to Eat it: For if one of theſe Things be wanting, the Diſh avails nothing; ſometimes it ſeems too ſweet, or too ſharp; at other times, it is too much, or too little Boyl'd: In ſhort, there muſt be a thouſand Cares before a Diſh can be made ready to pleaſe the Taſte of him who is to Eat it, without Anger and Diſpleaſure againſt his Cook, yea, againſt his own Appetite, that the Meat is not Savoury enough to his Taſte. In fine, Men ſpend the moſt part of their Lives in ſeeking Satisfaction

(r) *Matth.* xvi. 25. (s) 1 *Cor.* xv. 20.

in

in Meat, without being able fully to find it, and they Love their Bellies more than God, ſetting their Hearts and Affections upon their Dainty Fare, tho' it is ſo troubleſome, and oftentimes prejudicial to their Health, while they loſe Eternal Life for the Love of ſuch nafty Food; or, which is yet more ſhameful, of Carnal Pleaſures, which are as Hurtful to the Soul's Health as the Pleaſures of Taſte, being yet more enticing to Corrupt Nature, which naturally endeavours to be joyned again to its Part, as a Serpent cut in pieces turns and winds it ſelf till it have recovered all its pieces: Thus the Woman having been ſeparated, and as it were cut off from the Man by Sin, he has a great inclination to joyn himſelf to her again; Which is likewiſe neceſſary for Propagation.

§. 151. But the Miſery is, that they deſire this Conjunction, not only for Propagation, but to delight themſelves in it, and to give Pleaſure and Satisfaction to their Corrupt Nature; ſetting their whole Heart and their Affections on it, inſtead of reſerving them for the Love of God: For thoſe Carnal Pleaſures do take up and poſſeſs the whole Man in him who delights in thoſe filthy Luſts, produced by Sin: And how can they Love the Production of Sin, without loving Sin it ſelf, which is the Father that begot this uncomely Production, which, laying aſide the neceſſity, would be hateful to all Men of Underſtanding? But the Blindneſs of Men makes them Delight in thoſe Carnal Pleaſures, though in themſelves they are afflicting, and do often deſtroy Nature it ſelf. How many have loſt their Lives by this Luxury? How many Great and Holy Men have fallen grievouſly, and made themſelves Miſerable? A *Sampſon* loſt his Life by it, after having taken ſo many ſtrong Holds: A *Solomon* has left his Salvation doubtful: How many Tears of Penitence did the Adultery committed with *Bathſheba* cauſe unto *David*? How many Holy Perſons have fallen into God's Diſpleaſure by this Luxury, after they were raiſed unto great degrees of Vertue? Conſider the Words of St. *Jerom*, who ſays; *I have ſeen the moſt elevated Souls deſcend from Mount* Lebanon, *of whoſe Salvation I durſt not doubt; while yet I have ſeen them deſcend into the Deep*: How many Murthers, Robberies, Adulteries, proceed from this Carnal Concupiſence, which is as it were the ſource and nurſery of all kind of Sins? For as ſoon as one gives up his Heart to this ſhameful Paſſion, he loſes ſound Judgment and Reaſon, and often commits Follies, of which he Repents all his Life-time, and ſo renders himſelf Miſerable, and the Enemy of God in this Life, and continues ſo to be

through all Eternity. Behold the end of this *Luſt of the Fleſh*, if it is not bridled and overcome by the Vertue of *Faſting and Prayer*, which are the true Weapons by which *this kind of Devil* of Luxury is *caſt out*: Even as the Scripture ſaith, that Jeſus Chriſt caſt ſeven Devils out of *Mary Magdalen*, which were nothing elſe but ſeven Sins which ſhe had loved, of which the chief was the Luſt of the Fleſh: This likewiſe is the moſt common and ordinary Sin among Men, by which more Periſh, than by any other Sin, and it is nouriſhed by Gluttony; to which Sins the Devil joins himſelf, and encreaſes them as much as he can, that he may the more engage Men under his Laws.

§. 152. And ſeeing this Luſt of the Fleſh proceeds from Corruption, the Devil has a full hold of it: For he ſtill Unites himſelf with all that is Corrupt in Nature. This is his Element in which he Lives and Rules. For how ſoon Man Corrupted himſelf by Sin, the Devil took poſſeſſion of his Underſtanding, and keeps him from applying himſelf any longer to conſider Eternal things, but he ſets himſelf wholly to take care of Earthly things, as if Man had been Created only for them. The Devil Mingles himſelf alſo with the Fleſh and Blood of Man's Body, kindling therein this Concupiſcence, to make it exceed and abuſe it ſelf as much as poſſible: For if Man were not excited by the Devil, he would abide in this within the Limits of Nature, as the Beaſts do, who do not grow hot in this Concupiſcence, but in ſo far as is Neceſſary for Generation. But the Devil to make Man Sin, heats him in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, without bounds or Meaſure: In which Man acquieſceth, when he does not reſiſt this Luxury, nor keeps it within the bounds of neceſſity: This he ought to obſerve likewiſe as to Eating and Drinking, which are neceſſary for the ſupport of this Life. But becauſe the Devil has a hold alſo upon the Corruption of the Meat we Eat, he augments the Appetite to make Men exceed and fall from Gluttony into carnal Luſts; which two Sins are joined together. For this reaſon our Saviour adviſeth, (t) *To Watch and Pray; that we enter not into Temptation*: For that Man will hardly be chaſt, who does not Live ſoberly, and watches not againſt the Temptations of the Devil, who watches Day and Night to kindle ſtill more this Fire of Luxury, which is fed by the fewel of delicious Food. Wherefore Jeſus Chriſt had reaſon to ſay, (u) *That this kind of Devils goeth not out but by Faſting and*

(t) *Matth.* xxvi. 41. (u) *Matth.* xvii. 21.

Prayer,

Prayer. It is of theſe Devils who dwell in the Fleſh and Blood of luſtful Perſons, that Jeſus Chriſt ſays, *they muſt be caſt out by Faſting and Prayer.* This Counſel ought to be regarded by all who deſire to become Chriſtians; for all are Subject to this Law of Concupiſcence, which they muſt Wreſtle againſt, if they would be Saved; which nevertheleſs cannot be overcome but by Faſting and Abſtinence, and by continual Prayer. Seeing this Luſt is ſtill in Motion, it muſt likewiſe be continually reſiſted. It is of this Carnal Concupiſcence that the Scripture ſpeaks, when it ſayes, that *our Life is a continual Warfare,* where he who will not Combat is already Vanquiſhed, Lives and Dies out of God's favour, and goes to everlaſting Deſtruction, ſeeing none but they *who do Violence to their corrupt Nature, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven* (x).

§. 153. What will thoſe Well-meaning Perſons ſay to this, who hope to be Saved, becauſe they have committed no Groſs and outward Sins, tho' they Live according to their corrupt Nature, in the Luſt of Eyes, the Luſt of the Fleſh, and the Pride of Life, which are all capital Sins, comprehending all other Sins? While they do not reckon them to be Sins, but think it is lawful for them to deſire every thing that is Good and Pleaſant, and to follow the Luſt of the Fleſh eſpecially in Marriage, they fooliſhly imagining that the Married may Live together as they pleaſe. They do not conſider, that Sin conſiſts in a Man's withdrawing his affections from God to love his luſtful pleaſures, and place his Heart and affections upon them, inſtead of fixing them upon God alone, who Created Man for this only end; and they do not reflect that to render a Man the Enemy of God there needs no more but that he love and follow the Inclinations of his Nature; and that Sin is a Spiritual inward quality, proceeding from the Heart and from the Conſent of Man's Will: For example,

§. 154. Men do not diſcover the *Pride of Life,* which is hid within a Perſon, unleſs he give outward Demonſtrations of it, which the moſt Proud do carefully avoid. When they deſign to paſs for humble and vertuous Perſons, they diſſemble their hidden Pride, and by their Civility appear humble, tho' all Men deſcended of *Adam* are born with the Pride of Life in their Souls; none being exempted from this Vice, but they who have reſiſted this natural Haughtineſs, and overcome this Devil of Pride, who made Hell. For how ſoon Lucifer would be raiſing himſelf above himſelf, he fell from his High Dignity into the Abyſs of all

(x) *Matth.* xi. 12.

Miſeries. Thus in like manner does the Man who eſteems and exalts himſelf: He falls from the high Dignity of being the Son of God into the Abyſs of his Hatred and Diſpleaſure: This *Adam* felt to his Loſs when he had a mind to know Good and Evil as God; he was thruſt from his Glorious State into all thoſe Miſeries, under which we Groan even to this day, after having diſcovered his Nakedneſs, which God hid, and deriding his Pride, ſaid unto him (y) *Behold!* Adam *is become like unto us.*

§. 155. How many are there who deſerve now to be thus derided, who have ſo many and ſo great reaſons to be humbled under ſo Wretched a Life as Sin has cauſed to us, our Bodies being full of Miſeries and Diſeaſes, and our Minds of Ignorance, and yet Men reckon themſelves to be ſound and wiſe, as *Adam* thought he was, even after his Sin? They ſet up for mighty Men, whereas they are weak, ſilly Creatures. They ſpend their Money to go to the Univerſities, there to learn follies, of which the Learned have more than the Unlearned. All this comes from that *Pride of Life*, which all Men bring into the World with them. This Sin is natural to them, and grows up with them, if it is not reſiſted and overcome by him who is poſſeſs'd of it. This Pride keeps up even in thoſe who are counted moſt Spiritual, and hides it ſelf under a Shadow of Virtue. Where it appeas leaſt, there it is ſo much the more Subtil, tho' it Damns Men, even the Godly; for the Lord ſaith, (z) *I Reſiſt the Proud, and give Grace to the Humble.* This ſignifies that God reſiſts the Pious and the Devout, who have a haughty Spirit, and the Pride of Life hid in their Hearts: For it would be ſuperfluous for God to ſay, *I reſiſt the Wicked, who are proud*; ſeeing God ſtill reſiſts the Wickedneſs of the Wicked: But he makes us to underſtand, that he reſiſts the Good, and thoſe who pray to him, ſo long as they have the Pride of Life, and have not overcome and ſubdued it. This Pride of Life is moſt dangerous for Souls that aim at Perfection: It is likewiſe the moſt hidden Vice, which even he who is poſſeſs'd with it doth very hardly diſcover. It ſlips inſenſibly into the moſt Holy Things, and into our our beſt Actions, and deſtroys all the Good of our good Works: For as a good Caudle made with Wine, Eggs and Sugar, would be quite ſpoil'd, and made bitter, if a little of the Chimney Soot were boil'd in it, all its good Taſte would periſh, nothing would remain but

(y) *Gen.* iii. 22. (z) *Jam.* iv. 6.

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Bitterneſs: So is it as to a Man's Vertues; he may be very temperate, chaſte, aſſiduous in Prayer, yea, and mortifie his Body, and give of his Goods unto the Poor; but if withal he cheriſh in his Soul the Pride of Life, all his good Works are vain and unacceptable to God, who reſiſts the Proud, and accepts not of the Offerings of the Haughty; yea, he reſiſts their Prayers, and will not hear them; and as it is ſaid, (a) *That the Prayer of the Righteous availeth much before God*; ſo I ſay, That the Prayer of the Proud is deſpiſed of God. He muſt gain the Heart of God that would be acceptable to him; and ſeeing he gives his Heart to the Humble, how can the Proud obtain the ſame?

§. 156. It requires great Labour to overcome this Pride of Heart, and to learn of Jeſus Chriſt, *who is meek and lowly of Heart* (b). There is no Example more recommended by Jeſus Chriſt in the Goſpel than this Humility of Heart, and there is nothing leſs practiſed by Chriſtians than this. They are well pleaſed to follow him in high Myſteries, as to go to the H. Supper, to the Church, to Sermons, to frequent the Sacraments; ſaying, that Jeſus Chriſt has inſtituted them, ſuch as Baptiſm and the Supper, &c. but as for Humility of Heart, which is ſo neceſſary for Salvation, they neglect and ſlight it. Wherefore he who would become a Chriſtian in good earneſt, muſt firſt of all lay for the Foundation-Stone of the Building of his Vertue, true Humility of Heart; for otherwiſe God will always reſiſt him, even though he had acquir'd many other Vertues; if he is wanting in Humility, he is wanting in all. It would be not enough to have overcome the *Luſt of the Eyes*, nor *the Luſt of the Fleſh*, if withal he does not overcome *the Pride of Life*; for theſe are the Three Capital Sins with which a Man is born, and the one cannot be ſentenced without the other.

§. 157. Thoſe Three Capital Enemies muſt be overcome in order to Salvation; *For no unclean Thing ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. A Man ought to employ all his Lifetime to overcome, at leaſt to combat, thoſe Three Enemies of our Souls. This is all the Work he has to do in this World, which is his Time of Trial, whither we are ſent to purge our Souls from the Filthineſs that the Fall of *Adam* has brought into them: No Man can be ignorant of this, that thoſe Three Capital Sins are to be found in the Inclinations of corrupt Nature; and therefore he who would be ſaved muſt war againſt them, elſe we die Children of Wrath and Perdi-

(a) *Jam.* v. 16. (b) *Matth.* xi. 29.

tion,

tion, as we are born. In such a Case we need no other Sentence of Condemnation, but that given to *Adam*, when God said to him, (c) *Because thou hast hearkened unto the Voice of thy Wife, and hast eaten of the Tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: Cursed is the Ground for thy sake*; that is to say, all Men who shall come of thee shall be cursed; and Man cannot be raised from this Malediction without himself; seeing it proceeds from the Sin which his own Will has caused, the same Will must now resist this Malignity perpetrated in by him, else those Wounds can never be heal'd; for he who hearkens unto the Voice of his corrupt Nature abides under all kinds of Curses, seeing this Corruption doth continually disobey God, and this cursed Flesh doth that which God commands not to be done, Wherefore a Man must resist it, and never obey what Nature desires, for this is infallibly evil.

§. 158. Wherefore he who does not resolve to deny himself can never be saved; seeing he abides the Enemy of God without Reconciliation, being born in the Three Capital Sins (d) *The Lust of the Eyes, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Pride of Life*, which are the Sources of all other Sins. And instead of resisting them, we see Christians now-a-days do cherish them, heighten their Covetousness, the Lust of their Flesh, and the Pride of their Lives. For who is there now that is satisfied with what he has, without desiring more? Who is there that does not wish to be advanced in the World, to be better served and treated, to heap up Money, that he may the better satisfie his sensual Appetites and carnal Lusts? Who is there that does not aspire after a better Estate, and higher Places? In fine, Where is the Man now among Christians that is not puffed up with Vain-glory? Yea, the most Poor and Wretched cannot bear with being debased or despised, and seek Occasions to procure Mens good Opinion and Esteem.

This Treatise remain'd thus unfinish'd, by reason of the Persecution which the Author was then under; and while she was writing this, she died in that Persecution.

(c) Gen. iii. 17. (d) 1 John ii. 17.

DIRE-

DIRECTIONS which God gives to his Children in these latter Days, by the means of A. B.

I. BE united together in one and the same Will.
II. Live in Peace.
III. Seek nothing but my Glory.
IV. Love the Brethren.
V. Shun idle Words.
VI. Serve one another in things necessary, and not for pleasing Men.

And with respect to outward things, he saith further.

I. DO every thing seasonably and in good Order; for *I am a God of Order:* And Confusion and Disorder come of the Devil and of Sin.

II. Never be Anxious, nor hurried about temporal Affairs; but whatever you do, study to do it well, in Peace and Quietness: For a wandring and disquiet mind ruines all.

III. Take care to improve every thing, that nothing may be wasted or lost: For whatever is lost thro' your negligence will be required of you; and what ye don't want your selves, may be useful to others.

IV. Keep your selves always employed about things Salutary, profitable, or necessary: For Idleness is the Mother of all evil, and the Devil rests in the slothful and empty Soul.

V. Labour that ye may accomplish your Penitence; and not to please Men, or get Money, or for your own Satisfaction: For whatsoever ye do for any other end than to please me, is Labour lost; for ye always have your reward with the thing ye sought after, whether it be the pleasing Men, Money gotten, or your own Satisfaction.

VI. Mind every thing committed to your care with great Watchfulness, that nothing may be lost thro' your negligence: And whatever you find amiss, see to remedy it as soon as may be, repairing to the utmost of your power all the faults you have formerly committed.

VII.

VII. Do the ſame likewiſe with reſpect to your Neighbour's Goods, that you may fulfil the Command of *Loving your Neighbour as your Self.*

A ſhort Memorial *of ſome neceſſary and Principal things, to be done or avoided in order to Salvation; which contain the ſubſtance of* A. B's *Writings.*

VIII *BEATITUDES, ſhewing who are to be accounted Bleſſed and Happy.* Matt. 5.

1 To be Poor in Spirit.
2 To be of a contrite Heart.
3 To be meek and gentle.
4 To Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs.
5 To be Merciful.
6 To be pure in Heart.
7 To be of a pacifick Spirit.
8 To be perſecuted for the ſake of God and Truth.

VII. *Gifts* of the *Holy-Ghoſt which are infus'd into thoſe Hearts where he reſides. Iſa.* 11.
1. Wiſdom.
2 Underſtanding.
3 Counſel.
4 Might.
5 Knowledge.
6 Piety.
7 Holy Fear.

XII *Fruits* of the *Holy Spirit, which he produceth in thoſe whom he poſſeſſeth.* Gal. 5.
1. Love.
2 Joy.
3 Peace.
4 Patience.
5 Long ſuffering
6 Gentleneſs.
7 Goodneſs.
8 Meekneſs.
9 Faith.
10 Modeſty.
11 Temperance.
12 Chaſtity.

III *Theological* or *Divine Virtues, which are only to be found in True Chriſtians.* 1 Cor. 13.
1 Faith. 2. Hope. 3. Charity.

[III *Paſtoral Gifts* 2 *Tim.* 1. 7.
1 The Spirit of Power.
2 The Spirit of Love.
3 The Spirit of a ſound Mind.]

III *Foundations of all Truth.*
1 God is the Sole Original of Good, from whom can proceed no Evil.
2 From corrupted Man, or corrupt Nature; even as from the Devil, proceeds nothing but Evil.
3 Nature it ſelf is a Nothing.

III *Eſſential Qualities of God, the Rules of all our Actions.*
1 Righteouſneſs. 2 Truth, 3 Goodneſs.

III. Re-

III *Redemptions of Men by Jesus Christ.*
1. In Adam.
2 At his Incarnation.
3 In these latter Days, by a new concession of Strength, and of the last Graces and Mercies of God, to those that will resolve to keep the Gospel-Law.

III *Properties of Christ and of his Spirit.*
1. Poverty. 2 Contempt. 3 Sufferings.

III *Evangelical Counsels.*
1 Poverty. 2 Continence. 3 Obedience.

III *Means to fulfil them*
1 To renounce Covetousness.
2 To renounce Sensuality.
3 To renounce Self-Will.

III *Promises made at Baptism.*
1 To renounce the World.
2 To renounce the Devil.
3 To renounce the Lusts of the Flesh. Which are our three Enemies.

[III *Prerogatives of the Christian Birth-right*
1 To be a Child of God.
2 To be a Member of Christ.
3 To be an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.]

VII *Conditions of Christian Childhood*
1 To Weep.
2 To be made clean from his Filth.
3 To learn to Eat.
4 To learn to Go.
5 To learn to Speak.
6 To learn to Work.
7 To learn to govern himself.

III *Exhortations* and *Promises of God to encourage us.*
1 Ask, and it shall be given you.
2 Seek, and ye shall find.
3 Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

III *Remedies against Temptations.*
1 To be Sober. 2 To be Watchful. 3 To pray.

IV *Last Ends of Man.*
1 Death. 2 Judgment. 3 Hell. 4 Heaven.

III *Universal Sins.*
1 The Lust of the Eyes.
2 The Lust of the Flesh.
3 The Pride of Life.

VII *Capital Sins.*
1 Pride.
2 Avarice.
3 Uncleanness.
4 Intemperance.
5 Envy.
6 Wrath.
7 Sloth.

[VII. *Capital Virtues opposite to these*
1 Humility.
2 Liberality.
3 Purity.
4 Abstinence.
5 Charity.
6 Patience.
7 Vigilance.]

VII *Sin*

VII *Sins against the Holy Spirit.*

1. Oppoſition to a known Truth.
2 Obſtinacy in Sin.
3 Preſumption of Salvation without good Works.
4 Deſpair of God's Mercy.
5 Spiritual Pride.
6 Spiritual ſenſuality.
7 Envy at the Spiritual Gifts and Graces of others.

IX *Ways by which we partake of other Mens Sins.*

1. By Counſel, as the High-Prieſt ſlew *Chriſt*.
2 By Command, as *David* ſlew *Uriah*.
3 By Conſent, as *Paul* was guilty of the Death of *Stephen*.
4 By Flattery, as the falſe Prophets, &c.
5 By Provocation, as *Abimelech*, *Judg.* 9.
6 By Participation, as the Princes and Nobles, *Iſa.* 1. 23.
7 By Concealment, as *Ezek.* 33. throughout,
8 By Connivance, as *Eli* in the Caſe of his Sons.
9 By Defence, as *Ezek.* 33.

[IV *Crying Sins.*

1 Self-Murder.
2 Sodomy.
3 Oppreſſion of the Poor.
4 Defrauding the Hireling.

IV *Cardinal Virtues.*

1 Prudence, *Matt.* 10. 16.
2 Juſtice, *Matt.* 22. 21.
3 Fortitude, *Eph.* 6. 10.
4 Temperance, *Eph.* 4. 18.

VII *Works of Bodily Mercy.*

1 To feed the Hungry.
2 To give Drink to the Thirſty.
3 To entertain Strangers.
4 To cloath the Naked.
5 To relieve, or comfort the Priſoner.
6 To viſit the Sick.
7 To bury the Dead.

VII *Works of Spiritual Mercy.*

1 To teach the Ignorant.
2 To counſel the Doubtful.
3 To reprove the Sinner.
4 To comfort the Mourner.
5 To forgive Offences.
6 Patiently to bear the Infirmities either of Body or Soul in any one.
7 To pray both for Friends and Enemies, and under every Condition.]

XV *Conditions of Charity, without which all the reſt profits nothing.*

1 It ſuffers long.
2 It is kind.
3 Is not envious.
4 Is not inſolent.
5 Is not puffed up.
6 Is not diſdainful.
7 Is not ſelf-ſeeking.
8 Is not eaſy to be provok'd.
9 It thinketh no Evil.
10 Rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but in the Truth.
11 Endureth all.
12 It Believeth all.
13 Hopeth all.

14 Supporteth all.
15 Never faileth.

[II *Commandments of the Law of Nature,*

1 Whatſoever ye would that Men ſhould do unto you, do ye the ſame unto them.
2 Whatſoever you would not have done to your ſelf, never do to any one.

II *Commandments of the Law of Grace,*

1 Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul and with all thy Might,
2 Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.]

III *Motives of all that ought to be done or avoided.*

1 Penitence.
2 Love to God.
3 Charity to Men.

A *Threefold Summary* of all:

1 Love.
2 Reſignation.
3 Dependence.

Mrs. Antonia Bourignon's *CONFESSION of FAITH, publickly preſented by her to the Court of* Holſtein, *to Oppoſe the malicious Reports which ſome had induſtriouſly rais'd againſt the Purity of her Doctrine and Sentiments.*

I. I Am a Chriſtian, and do believe all that a true Chriſtian ought to believe.

II. I am Baptiz'd into the Catholick Church, in the Name of the *Father*, in the Name of the *Son*, in the Name of the *Holy Ghoſt*.

III. I believe the Twelve Articles of the *Creed*, or the Apoſtles Symbol; and do not doubt of any one Article of it.

IV. I believe that *Jeſus Chriſt* is true God, and that he is alſo a true Man; and likewiſe that he is the Saviour and Redeemer of the World.

V. I believe the Goſpel, the Holy Prophets, and all the Holy Scriptures both of the Old and New Teſtament.

And I will Live and Die in all the points of this Faith, which I proteſt before God and Men, to all whom it may concern.

In Teſtimony whereof, I have Subſcrib'd this my *Confeſſion* with my hand, and Seal'd it with my Seal.

At Sleſwick, *the* 11*th of* March, 1675. [L. S.]

Anthoinette Bourignon.

The

The following VERSES, *being a* Tranſlation, *or rather a* Paraphraſe *of the Original* French, *which treat of the Univerſal Judgments which are ready to be inflicted; of the Reſtoration of the* Church, *and the approaching Kingdom of* Jeſus Chriſt, *ought to be inſerted* Pag. 346. *at the End of* §. 60.

RETire, ye Heav'n-born Souls! Come let us fly,
And ſhun the Wicked's Plagues, which are (ſo nigh.
This ſhatter'd Cruſt of Earth diſſolves apace,
And all the Powers of Heav'n run their laſt Race.
Up! make no Stay, leſt ſwelling Floods of Wo,
With their fierce rampant Surges overflow,
And plunge our Souls to theſe dark Shades below.

The World's approaching Plagues.

The diſmal *Signs* that were foretold appear;
That fatal Hour on Time's ſwift Wings draws near.
Let's to the *Rock of Ages* upward fly,
And in ſome ſhady Cleft there ſhelter'd lie;
And, wing'd by *Faith*, let's mount and ſoar above,
And trace the Steps of that Almighty *Love*.
Heav'n guards the fluttering Soul, leſt it ſhould ſtray,
And in ſome Maze of Darkneſs loſe its Way.
To you, bright Regions! then let's bend the Flight,
And leave behind this Scene of Shade and Night;
Where Floods of Vice in foaming Billows riſe,
And roaring Noiſe of Helliſh Thunder flies.

The meant of being preſerved during theſe Plagues, that are common to all.

To break the lofty Stream were but in vain,
Till all's renew'd, and moulded o're again.
For ſtill the more it runs the more it grows;
And as it's ſtopt, the faſter ſtill it flows.
When Heaven directs the Blow, who can decline
The fierce Encounters of the Wrath Divine?
O! then let's change the Courſe, and upward row,
And bid a long Adieu to all below.
Unchain'd and diſengag'd from Earthly Droſs,
Lets tread the Thorny Footſteps of the *Croſs*.
When thro' theſe inward higher Storms we preſs,
The outward lower Tempeſts touch the leſs:
For when begun, they'll burſt and downward tend,
And, far from us, beneath their Fury ſpend.
Mark 13. v. 19 Such Plagues in former times unmatch'd have been:
Such Tempeſts our Fore fathers have not ſeen.
Darkneſs and Horror ſhall vail o're the Skies,
And raviſh Heaven's bright Face from Human Eyes.
Poor ſhivering Mortals then entomb'd in Groans
Shall gaſp away their Souls in Sighs and Moans.
None can eſcape, the Floods muſt overflow,
Both Good and Bad its Shock ſhall undergo,
Tho' by quite different Streams on both it flow.

The Wicked and the Good ſhall be diſſerently affected with their Sufferings Rev. 9. 20, 21. & 16. 21.

The raging Wave ſhall impious Souls ſurround,
Burſt on their Rocky Hearts, it ſhall rebound,
And their loud Blaſphemies to Heaven reſound.
Swell'd with fierce Helliſh Paſſions they ſhall foam,
And roving mad from Place to Place ſhall roam:
Then turn'd like Devils, their enraged Soul
In Storms of furious Thoughts ſhall toſs and roul,
Till low'ring Clouds of Wo vail o're their Sight,
And ſeal their Eyes in Everlaſting Night.

But, oh! theſe Plagues can never once controul,
Nor quench the Ardors of the amorous Soul;
Which with reſign'd Devotion floats along,
And as it glides away, accents the Song:
Let me embrace the Croſs, ſigh, droop and die,
Beneath my Saviour's Dolours gaſping lie.

But Conſolation Springs at laſt ſhall flow,
And calm theſe raging Waves that toſs them ſo:
That Heavenly Light ſhall then dart forth a Ray,
And kindle all their Darkneſs into Day.
Welcome ye Bleſs'd, th' Eternal *WORD* ſhall cry.
Their raptur'd Souls tun'd up to Extaſie,
In joyful Anthems eccho back the Voice,
While Heaven's grand Courtiers all reſound the Noiſe.
Mean time the rampant lofty Waves decline,
And turn pure Rivers Streams all Chryſtalline:
Their Dangers paſs, Heaven's Darling turns their Friend,
And Light it Self's enthron'd in their dark Mind.
O Joy! too high for Words! ye Seraphs tell;
Can your Bliſs match it? Haſt a Parallel.
Heaven ty'd to Earth! n'er to be loos'd again;
God joyn'd to Man by Love's Eternal Chain!
From ſuch a Hope full Tides of Joy ſhall flow,
And quicken Souls from Lethargies of Wo:
The fainter Glimm'rings of this charming View,
Shall reinforce their drooping Sp'rits anew;
Make them breaſt out the Storms, and float on high,
While all the roaring Billows round them fly.

The Conſolations of the Good.

Matt. 25. 34.

But, oh! the Soul that is not anchor'd ſo,
Is on the raging Waves toſs'd too and fro,
Till Spring Tide Surges of Tentation riſe,
And Perſecution's roaring Thunder flies.
Then all involv'd in Miſt, they wand'ring ſtray,
And ſtragling far behind, thus loſe their Way;
Till burſt with Griefs, at laſt they ſink below,
And lie entomb'd amidſt the Plunge of Wo.

Without theſe even the Good may periſh.

Impiety ſhall then ſo much prevail,
That even the Good themſelves ſhall almoſt fail:
Law now revers'd, Diſorder mounts the Throne,
And Juſtice from its Seat is tumbled down:

The laſt great Calamity, and its Diſorders.

That Spawn of Hell its Ten-fork'd Scepter plies,
Rev. 13.6 And Goodneſs ſpurn'd on, now dejected lies,
And falls to impious Rage a Sacrifice.
No Sunny Shades remain to ward the Blow,
To ſculk a while from this Tyrannick Foe.
God has abandon'd Earth to Satan's Rage,
Allow'd theſe Helliſh Powers thus to engage,
That Earth's gay Face may with Combuſtions burn,
And Nature's Frame to a Convulſion turn:
Whate're can charm the Senſe ſhall diſappear,
And all Earth's Beauties, now turn'd pale with Fear,
Shall Sable Weeds, inſtead of Glory, wear.
No Temples now, no ſacred Bells are found;
No Altars then with Smoak of Incenſe crown'd:
Religion now deſpis'd, to Heaven ſhall flee,
And all its Guardians here ſhall ſcatter'd be.

Warnings from God. O diſmal Storms! that muſt ſo ſoon appear,
So certain and ſo ſad, and yet ſo near.
Rouze up! ye vertuous Souls, be not deceiv'd,
The fatal Minute's nigh, tho' diſbeliev'd.
I ſound the laſt *Alarm*, come let us fly,
And not in Slumbers thus impriſon'd lie.
Chriſt has forewarn'd us to what Shades to run,
That this dire thund'ring Tempeſt we may ſhun.
Thrice happy! if ſuch Counſels we can chuſe,
If ſuch Commands of Love we don't refuſe.
Almighty Wiſdom calls us to be gone,
And in ſome cloſe Retreat, unheard, unknown;
To Riches and gay Fortunes bid Adieu,
Sweat out our Penance o'er the Spade and Plough.
Thus gain the bare Neceſſities of Life,
Far from Earth's noiſie Tumults, Trade and Striſe;
Regardleſs then of all we left behind,
In theſe mean Rural Shades our God we'll find.

Come out of Babylon, my People. Rev. 18. From *Matthew*'s bleſt Evangil we may ſee,
That *Now*'s the Time when ſuch dire Plagues muſt be.
O! let's not till that laſt Appearance ſtay;
Since blackeſt Horrors muſt o'recloud that Day.

The

The Winter Seaſon's nigh, let's not delay,
Leſt ſuch dire Torments do block up the Way.
Let's ſhun all Converſe and Society
With ſuch low Souls, as won't themſelves deny.
They're Saints in Mask, and counterfeit the Name:
But, ah! their Love's all Smoak without a Flame.
Let's not ſhift off the Flight, but haſte away,
And ſhake aſide thoſe Clogs that tempt our Stay:
The Soul's but clog'd with Wealth and Honours (vain,
That when ſhe'd upwards mount, her Flight reſtrain.
Unchain'd from all, O! then let's mount and fly,
And ſhun the raging Storms that beat ſo nigh;
Th'advancing Waves with thund'ring Eccho's roar,
And rowl the riſing Tides upon the Shore.
At the next Swing we may be ſwept away,
If ling'ring here below we longer ſtay.

Let's follow our Great Captain's Footſteps cloſe, *The Renovation of the Church*
And pant and thirſt no more for Earthly Droſs.
Let our full Breathings to Heaven's Regions be,
Renouncing all Terrene Felicity:
Concern'd for nought, but only how to pleaſe,
And yield our Wills to God a Sacrifice:
Reſign'd to him, prepar'd on every Hand,
To live or die, juſt as He ſhall command.
In Friendſhip's perfect Circle all combin'd,
As if we were but one compounded Mind;
Spurn on this Earth, and ſoaring upward move
To that pure Fountain of Eternal Love.
Poſſeſſing all in common, let's eſſay
All to be equal, each to each obey.
That Spawn of corrupt Nature, *Property*,
Untunes the Soul, and choaks its Harmony.
Let's therefore ſhun ſuch Bawlings, *Thine* and *Mine*,
They ſound too much of Earth for Souls Divine.
United then, from Contradiction free,
Let's diſtribute our Goods with Charity,
And God himſelf will all our Wants ſupply.

Heaven is enough, the Soul that feeds on *Love*,
Needs little here below, his All's above:
Th'inferior Part is nouriſh'd, when the Soul
Moves upwards to its God without Controul:
In this Almighty Fulneſs we ſhall find
All that can fill the moſt capacious Mind.
Contented then, let's, fill'd with Joy and Love,
Live like our Brother-Seraphs now above.
The Soul that's free of Cares on God doth reſt,
And when to him abandon'd is fully bleſt.
He that doth ſearch for nothing out of this,
Can never want the moſt conſummate Bliſs.

The Happineſs of Reſignation to God.

When once our Minds advance to ſuch a Strain,
We'll realize our Paradiſe again.
And waiting quietly till that Trumpet ſound,
When *Jeſus* ſhall appear with Glory crown'd;
With full Complacency we ſhall adore,
And reverence that All-commanding Power,
That deals out his Corrections in ſuch way,
As does at once his Wrath and Love diſplay:
With equal well-poiz'd Minds then let us bear
The Pardon and Chaſtiſement that's ſo near:
All comes from the ſame Hand, our Joys do ſpring
From that ſame Source, whoſe Streams ſuch Sorrows (bring.
The Soul that's joyn'd to God no Trouble knows,
No Change can e're diſturb its ſoft Repoſe.
If Riches periſh, theſe are not its Stay;
It cannot ſigh when Honours ſink away.
Tho' all were here renvers'd, unpain'd it lies,
And yields it ſelf to Heaven a Sacrifice.
O happy State! unmatch'd Felicity!
Tho' robb'd of all, and ſunk in Poverty,
When with Devotion wing'd the Soul can trace,
And feel this *All* in *All* in every Place.
Unhappy, thrice, unhappy ſhall he be,
That won't abandon all to follow Thee.
Where ſhall he reſt, where ſhall he have his Stay,
When ſuch dire Plagues ſurprize him in the Way?
O!

O! then let's all turn diſengag'd and free,
To follow *Jeſus* in Simplicity.

O Joy beyond Compare! who can expreſs
The matchleſs Wonders of that Happineſs?
Which ſhall advance, when once the Winter's gone,
And that Eternal Spring ſhall haſten on.
When Paradiſe ſhall be reſtor'd again,
And uncorrupted conſtantly remain,
And *Chriſt* in his pure Church for ever reign.
No carnal muddy Streams can hither flow,
All is refin'd and ſpiritualized ſo.
All this Creation, which now groans with Pain,
Deck'd in Eternal Bloſſoms ſhall remain;
When on ſome lofty Cloud Chriſt ſhall appear,
Encompaſs'd with his Saints, and ſettle here;
Form ſuch a Church as ſhall for ay remain
In pureſt Holineſs, without a Stain.

The Conſummation of Evil, and the Reeſtabliſhment of Good. Rev. 21, v. 3, 4, & 6.

All Evils now conſum'd ſhall quite remove,
When Man's conjoyn'd with that Eternal *Love*.
No Condemnation now, no Tears, no Groans,
No Sadneſs, and no Griefs, no Sighs and Moans.
They talk no more of theſe, their Theme's all *Love*;
Such Sorrows can't diſturb the Seats above:
An Univerſal Joy runs thro' them all,
Which does not ebb and flow, nor riſe and fall.
One *Love*, One *Faith*, One *Law* does all conjoyn,
And makes their Wills and Actions all Divine:
All different Parties wear that common Name
Of real Chriſtians now, for all's the ſame.
No factious Tumults then, no Ruptures there,
But *Turks*, *Jews*, *Pagans* undiſtinguiſh'd are.
All theſe joyn'd by the Laws of Charity,
Live in a perfect Love and Harmony,
And with the reſt of Saints advance to Thrones,
And riſe in Judgment 'gainſt theſe wicked ones;
Whom, chain'd by Devils, *Jeſus* ſhall ſentence
T'Infernal Shades, ne're to depart from thence.

The Beauties of the Church renew'd into the Gospel-Spirit.

And now th'Elect conven'd shall safely rest,
No Vice nor Passion can their Calms molest;
But all's dissolv'd in Loves, in purest Joys,
They chant forth Praise in Heavenly Melodies;
And imitate those Notes that Seraphs sing
In that Angelick Chorus to their King.
They'll be no more diverted when above,
From th'Entertainments of Eternal Love.
For *Jesus* here in Person shall remain,
And Face to Face their Souls shall entertain:
Thro' a Corporeal Vail, this Light Divine,
This Everlasting Sun shall daily shine,
That would too dazling prove for finite Eyes,
Should it in full and naked Glories rise.
Their Elder Brother then the Saints shall see
Descend from Heaven, enrob'd in Majesty,
To shew the glorious Triumphs of his Throne,
Which by his Suffrings and Contempt he won.
All Oracles shall be accomplish'd now,
And to Perfection their full Sense we'll know:
All Nature's Secrets then, each Mystery,
Which here amus'd our Thoughts, unvail'd shall be.
Is. 33. 4. 60. 21. 1. 25, 26. 4. 3. Rev. 21. 27. No Need of Sciences, nor Prophecies;
No Need of Incense now, nor Sacrifice:
But all Divine, as once in Paradise,
We'll breath in those pure Regions, free of Vice.

Is. 52. 1. *Hallelujah*, Rev. 19. 6, 7. O Heavenly Sion! where such Harmony,
Such Light, such Love, such sweet Felicity,
Still overflows; thrice happy is the Soul,
Whose lab'ring Flights to thee, Earth can't controul;
Whoe're that last Approach does haste away
To these bright Mansions of Eternal Day,
Which Christ did build, where such Joys are (contain'd,
Tho' by poor grov'lling Mortals thus disdain'd:
But oh! it must be so as he has said,
No sensualiz'd Soul this Path can tread.

Like

Like to the fooliſh Maids, in vain we ſtrive
At that Celeſtial Banquet to arrive,
Without pure Love; ſince none can thither fly,
But on theſe Golden Wings of *Charity*.

Parables of the Goſpel touching theſe laſt Wonders. Mat. 25. 1, &c.

The *Maſter of the Vineyard* ſtill does cry,
To all the wand'ring Travellers paſſing by;
But oh! theſe hop'd Rewards no Soul can find,
But ſhe that works there with a willing Mind.

Matt. 20. 1, &c.

The *Maſter of the Feaſt* invites us all,
But he that loves this Earth does ſlight the Call.
Jeſus! that Heavenly Food can't charm the (Soul,
Which in Terrene Delights does grov'ling rowl.

22. 2, &c.

The humble Saint like *Muſtard-Seed* muſt grow,
Which bloſſoms all above, but's ſmall below.
The high preſumptuous Soul then ſtrives in vain,
With full ſwell'd Sails, that ſacred Port to gain.

13. 31, 32.

Before we can attain the *hidden Prize*,
We muſt dig low to find out where it lies;
Thrice happy is that Soul, and truly wiſe,
That ſells his All, and this rich Treaſure buys.

13. 44.

The *Seed* that's not to full Perfection grown,
Before the Harveſt come muſt be cut down.
The Heart which Heavenly Rays cannot refine,
In theſe Celeſtial Orbs ſhall never ſhine.

13. 3, 7.

The precious *Heavenly Gem* is bought by none,
But by the Self-deny'd and humble one;
Who ſees that all the Bliſs which grows below,
Is but Amuſement and a gilded Show.

13. 45.

The

The Kingdom of Christ unknown till now. 2 Cor. 12. v. 2, 4.

The Glories of that Kingdom do tranſcend
All that poor Mortals now can comprehend.
The raviſh'd Saint that ſaw this glorious Light,
Durſt not diſplay the Wonders of the Sight.
Oft-times the Saints that propheſied of old,
Knew not the Sacred Things that they foretold.
Almighty Wiſdom kept them hid till now,
When all ſhall be unvail'd before our View.
The Men of Fleſh, by their corrupted Eye,
Don't ſee the bleſt Approach, tho' 'tis ſo nigh.
They read the Sacred Page, yet cannot know
How it's high Senſe muſt be accompliſh'd ſo.
Why *Jeſus* ſhould from Heaven to Earth deſcend,
Is too ſublime for them to comprehend:
How he ſhould reign on Earth, and give Repoſe
To this Creation, which now groans with Woes:
How this dark outward Cruſt ſhould diſappear,
And Earth tranſparent lucid Glories wear.
Thoſe are Diſcoveries too ſublime, too high,
For their dim, twinkling Light, *Philoſophy*.

Banquet Delights. Eternal Alliance.

O happy Feaſt, where Heaven and Earth's com-(bin'd,
Where Seraphs are with Saints together joyn'd.
O bleſt Alliance! after ſo much Pain.
O charming Reſt! ne're to diſreſt again,
Where Tears are baniſh'd, and no Griefs remain?

Diſpoſition for this.

Bleſt is the Man who purifies his Mind,
That he th'Enjoyment of ſuch Bliſs may find!
His Hopes can ne're be baffled when he tries,
Wing'd on by *Faith* and *Love* to catch the Prize.

Predictions of this Bliſs.

This Heavenly Reſt was firſt diſplay'd to Man,
When he from Paradiſe condemned ran;
And ever ſince ſome wandring Rays of Light
Were ſcatter'd up and down through Sacred Writ:
Who has the Soul to be enrag'd at this?
Who can diſdain a Truth ſo full of Bliſs?

How

How can theſe Words offend, that Comfort bring,
From which ſuch matchleſs Conſolations ſpring?
All Joys that heretofore we could poſſeſs,
Were but faint Shadows, when compar'd with this.
When *Jeſus* ſhall return to Earth again,
Deck'd with triumphant Glories, there remain;
And Heavenly Lawrels for theſe Temples weave,
That crown'd with thorny Sufferings mourn and grieve;
Conjoin'd to him by Sacred Chains of Love,
In joyful Raptures our bleſs'd Souls ſhall move.
Conſtraint now ceas'd, our Bliſs ſhall overflow,
No Darkneſs and no Sufferings then we'll know:
No Tendency to Paſſion, or to Vice;
But all Divine, as once in Paradiſe;
That Heavenly Sun in pure Ætherial Streams,
Around our Souls ſhall dart its Chryſtal Beams:
Thus ſwallow'd up in Light theſe Two combine,
Finite and Infinite together joyn.

Worldlings baniſh'd; the Humble and Simple receiv'd.

No Wordly carnal Soul can enter here,
Such for whom Jeſus would not ſpend his Prayer:
They are too low for ſuch advanced Bliſs,
Too groſs for ſuch refin'd Delight as this.
Since by Faith's Compaſs to Heaven's Port we ſteer,
None but the humble Soul can enter there.
Who hath believ'd, even when the Senſe was high,
Vail'd from his Sight, and wrapt in Myſtery.
When to this Land of Reſt the Soul doth move,
Outſoaring Reaſon's Views, wing'd on by Love:
No ſubtle Thoughts, nor piercing Wit can ſhew
The hidden Myſtick Paths thro' which we go.
Here when we mount we ſtop, when reſt, we fly,
And all our ſteep Aſcents do level'd lie
In the low Valleys of Humility.
And all along the Road we all muſt be,
Train'd up with Infant-like ſimplicity.

None

The Devil's Tares. Matt. 13. v. 25, 28.

None of this Truth could doubt, 'tis so expres,
Had not that great Disturber of our Blis,
Mix'd Tares of Pride to choak the rising Grain,
Lest any at the Harvest should remain:
And taught to glos away that Sacred Truth,
Which hath dropt from unerring Wisdom's Mouth.

Use the Talent. Matt. 25. 15, &c.

Let's our entrusted Talents then employ,
That we may render our Accounts with Joy:
For our great dreadful Sovereign will appear,
When few or none expect that He's so near:
Who shall, according to our Deeds below,
Reward us with Eternal Blis, or Wo.

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